Cennakēśavasvāmi Temple—Māceria

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THE EPIC OF PALNĀḌU

A Study and Translation of
Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha,
a Telugu Oral Tradition from
Andhra Pradesh, India

by
GENE H. ROGHAIR

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Preface

The recordings upon which this study and translation are based were made in Andhra Pradesh, India, in 1974. Inspiration for the project, however, came several years earlier. In November 1967 I spent my first night in a Telugu-speaking village. That night a bard playing a *tambura* or 'lute' came and sang a heroic narrative in front of the village Rāma Temple. He was accompanied by two men who played drums. After the evening meal, as the singer began his story, the temple square and the narrow streets leading into it rapidly filled with people. Some sat or squatted on the slate-covered streets. Others, mostly boys and young men, sat on the compound walls of the surrounding houses. The flat roofs of the houses were lined with women wearing bright saris and girls in long skirts. I sat on a cot along with several other men. By the time the story had reached its climax and come to an end, it was late at night. I had not understood a word, but I was captivated by this performance in the light of kerosene lanterns.

Two years later I left Pāluvāyi, a village in Palnad (Palnāḍu) Tāluk, Guntur (Guṇṭūru) District. By that time I had heard many more stories sung to the accompaniment of a variety of instruments: drums, harmonium (a kind of accordion), cymbals, goatskin bagpipes, *tamburas*, ankle bells, and others. I had by then learned enough Telugu to converse on most subjects. I had also developed some reading ability. Nevertheless, the narrative songs of the bards, the local dramas, and other village cultural events remained virtually unintelligible to me. I knew that some of the songs were associated with the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. I also knew that many of them were local or regional. It was exciting to hear oral version of India's great epics, but even more intriguing were the stories of local Gods and Heroes. My friends could tell me the bare outlines of the local stories, but the rich detail could only be communicated by the professional singers.

After I joined the Indian Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, I continued to be particularly interested in rural Telugu culture. In 1970–1 I began exploring the possibility of returning to Palnāḍu to do research. I wanted to focus on a limited area (perhaps a few villages) and try to learn how the inhabitants understood their own history and culture. A primary resource for such a study would be the oral literature which I knew was so popular with village audiences.

In my preliminary research I often found references to a book called *Palnāṭivīracaritra* or *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. I had heard of this book during my stay in India, but I had never seen it. Nevertheless, I did know something of what it was about. My friends in Pāluvāyi had often told me stories of the heroes of Palnāḍu. They had also pointed out many places associated with the stories. It seemed the logical place to begin.

As I began reading *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, I realized how much an understanding of Telugu culture, especially rural culture, would be dependent upon a thorough mastery of all levels of the Telugu language. A study of Telugu literature seemed the best immediate preparation for what I wanted to do. *Palnāṭivīracaritra* itself was a storehouse of cultural information that was not available in English. But in my reading I also found suggestions that there was more to the tradition than the printed text had to offer. I found occasional tantalizing references to singers who performed at the Festival of the Heroes in Kārempūḍi. Other singers were said to have once travelled from village to village singing the epic. Although I had not heard them, I assumed that they must be like the singers I had heard so many times in Pāluvāyi and other villages. None of the oral elements, however, were described in much detail. Furthermore, the written sources did not suggest that the oral elements were very important.

I decided on a twofold approach to *Palnāṭivīracaritra*. First, I wanted to translate the best available version. This would entail research in the libraries and bookstores of Andhra Pradesh. Second, I wanted to investigate what was available in Palnāḍu itself. If possible, I wanted to record some oral versions. Nothing that I read gave me much hope that extensive oral versions would still be available. Furthermore, Telugu people whom I met did not know if such oral versions were still sung or not. One thing, however, made me realize that the sources to which I had access might not be giving me the whole picture: I had heard many narrative songs sung in Telugu villages, yet even these songs were either ignored in written sources or treated as something of the past.

The distance between oral audiences and the educated élite may be appreciated from the following. In 1974 I was working on my translation of *Palnāṭivīracaritra* and doing research in the library at Andhra University, Waltair. At the same time I was endeavouring to contact singers in that area. I received varied responses to my enquiries. Few of them were helpful. The most common response was that there used to be such singers but that they were now found in only the most remote villages. Furthermore, why bother with the songs of low-caste

singers anyway? Would I not be more interested in reading the Telugu classics? The first hint that the only distance between me and the singers I sought was social came from a postmaster in a sub-post-office in Waltair. He knew where some singers were performing; for three Sunday nights they had been singing *The Battle of Bobbili* at a hut town of itinerant construction workers just down the street from his post office. This was less than four blocks from the university where people had assured me that the songs were sung only in remote villages. A roadside vendor introduced me to a barber. The barber in turn introduced me to some singers. Before long I was spending many delightful hours recording the local songs of that area.

By the time I reached Kārempūḍi in Palnāḍu, the centre of the Cult of the Heroes, I had a good collection of Telugu oral narratives. Some of the songs were performed in a few hours; others required as much as two or three nights. Nevertheless, I was totally unprepared for what was in store for me in Palnāḍu. I went first to the Temple of the Heroes in Kārempūḍi. The *Pīṭhādhipati* (a head of the temple organization) told me where to find some singers who regularly sang for the yearly festival. One lived in near-by Jānapāḍu. His name was Āliśeṭṭi Gāleyya. When I arrived, Gāleyya was lying on a cot near his tiny cotton and sorghum stalk house. He was not in the best of health, but he became filled with energy when I told him that I would like to hear him sing *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha* (the name most often used for the oral versions). I wanted a complete version and wondered how long it would take. Gāleyya told me that it would take *thirty nights*. I had only three ninety-minute cassettes and a recorder which was not working properly. I recorded enough to know that I wanted to come back and returned to Waltair.

Before going back to Gāleyya, I spent two weeks with Mēḍukoṇḍuru Cennayya, another singer, who lived in Lām, a village near Guntur. I arranged for Cennayya to sing, and he began performing each night in front of his house. Every night a large crowd gathered; every night he delighted them and me with a new episode from the epic cycle. This went on for about twelve days. Finally, when his drummer had to return to his home village, Cennayya summarized the remaining stories for me.

Though Cennayya was a very accomplished singer, I found his dialect somewhat difficult. Moreover, the quality of the recording was not as high as I would have liked because the acoustics where he was performing were not satisfactory. Cennayya had omitted several long episodes in order to fit the epic into a shorter time period. I still wanted a full version and decided that I must adopt a different approach.

In October 1974 I took Ālišeṭṭi Gāleyya to a guest-house at Nāgārjunasāgar Dam. Singing twice a day, morning and evening, Gāleyya sang the entire epic as he knew it. It took two weeks and came to a total of over thirty hours. Gāleyya hummed the refrains ordinarily sung by the accompanists, and he sang without the drum or bagpipe drone. In other respects he sang in his customary style. There was always a small audience in the guest-house when Gāleyya sang and their interest was an inspiration to him. My previous knowledge of the tradition also helped him to do his best.

As I listened to Cennayya, and later to Gāleyya, I began to realize something: the five-hundred-page text of *Palnāṭivīracaritra* which I had read was not authoritative. It had been patched together from several separate manuscripts by a university professor who was not of the tradition. These men who were singing were the masters of the tradition. Cennayya spent most of his time working as a labourer in the fields. Gāleyya had recently retired from practising a form of country medicine. But as they sang it, the epic had an immediacy and a coherence which were lacking in the scholarly editions based on fragments of manuscripts. Gods and Heroes who inexplicably appeared in the printed text often had whole stories about how they came to be involved in the epic events. As Cennayya and Gāleyya sang it, the epic ceased to be simply a story. It became a whole world in itself. Yet that world was not unrelated to the one in which they themselves lived their daily lives. I knew then that it was the oral version that I wanted to translate. The printed text might occasionally have developed a single episode more effectively, but the oral versions more than compensated for this in the vigour, immediacy, and completeness of the whole epic.

I am deeply indebted to both Cennayya and Gāleyya and to those who accompanied them. Some of these accompanists will be the next generation of singers. Both men were sensitive to what I wanted to do. They were also very pleased that their epic was going to be conveyed to a wider audience. My only regret is that I could not translate both oral versions. Though the basic stories are always the same, the two singers have their individual strengths in creatively reworking them in their respective performances.

Acknowledgements

Many individuals and organizations have helped to make this study and translation possible. My first thanks go to Velcheru Narayana Rao. I have benefited immeasurably from his sensitivity to and deep involvement with Telugu literature in all its written and oral manifestations. His scholarship is complemented by his fresh insights. His abilities as a teacher are unmatched. He has been language teacher, cultural informant, inspiration, and critic. He has also helped me though many difficult passages in the translation. His professional contributions have made this work possible, but his warm friendship and understanding have helped to make it a pleasure.

My thanks are due to Robert E. Frykenberg for his commitment to and support of Telugu research and this project in particular. I also appreciate his careful reading of the first draft and his many comments and suggestions. My thanks are also due to John F. Richards for his warm encouragement and many discussions; to George L. Hart III for his contributions at the formative stage; to Tumati Donappa for his kindness during my research at Andhra University; to Peter D. Smith for his constructive criticism; to Tangirala Venkata Subbaravu for the hours we spent together discussing Telugu oral literature; and to Jill Poris for her annotation of the musical elements in Chapter V.

The American Peace Corps allowed me my first exposure to India and to Telugu language and culture. The people of Pāluvāyi gave me the impetus to delve deeper. Especially important were the many contributions of Pasam Narsi Reddi, President of Paluvayi, and his family, Pasam Koti Reddi and his family, Mervatu Muni, S. Venkatapala Raju, and the children who made me feel so much at home.

Much support in this venture has been provided by the technique of expanded awareness transmitted to me by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Arthur Leath Jr. has made no small contribution in helping me to learn to integrate my personal and professional lives. Stefanie Roden's enthusiasm for the project added another dimension to her careful typing of the manuscript. A special thanks to Earline Hefferlin who gave so generously of her time and professional skill in the preparation of the index. Estelle Strizhak deserves mention for her important contributions to the study of Telugu in the United States. I shall always be grateful to Dan Matson for his good humour and for the dictionary

which he gave me at a critical time. I am indebted to my parents, Edward and Margaret Roghair, for more than I can express. In this context I especially recognize the impact of the early exposure they gave me to the Bible and to stories of European gods and heroes.

Though they are frequently mentioned elsewhere in this study, I must again mention the people of the *Palnāṭi Vīra Ācāramu* who were so helpful in introducing me to their tradition. I am particularly indebted to the *Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyavantulu*, Āliśeṭṭi Gāleyya and Mēḍukoṇḍuru Cennayya. The *Piṭhādhipati*, Pidugu Venkata Anjaneya Siva Prasad, and the *Ācaryavantulu*, Madala Narasimha Ravu, both showed me great kindness in my efforts to learn more of their tradition.

My field research in 1974 was generously supported by a grant from the American Institute of Indian Studies. A National Defense Foreign Language fellowship allowed me to work full time on the translation for several months. I am grateful for the support of the University of Wisconsin Department of South Asian Studies and its chairman, Manindra K. Verma, and for that of the University of Wisconsin Department of International Studies and Programs and of Joseph W. Elder.

Finally, I owe more than she realizes to my wife Carol. Her unceasing efforts to keep me in touch with the larger world outside my academic work have greatly aided that work and my life as a whole.

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Notes on Transliteration

In translating Telugu names and words I have attempted to preserve the oral form as it appears on the tapes. Thus the forms of some words will differ from standard written usage. Transliteration is according to the accepted Sanskrit system with a few exceptions. The length of the mid-vowels e ē o ō is marked, whereas Sanskrit has only ē ō. Words of Sanskrit origin are given in their Telugu form where it differs from the Sanskrit. *Anusvāra* is transliterated by 'n' except in the case of the retroflex and labial nasals which are phonemic. Place-names are normally transliterated by the same system, but when they are widely known by some other spelling I have given that spelling as well as the transliterated form, in parentheses.

Vowels

	Front		Central		Back	
	short	long	short	long	short	long
High	i	ī			u	ū
Mid	e	ē			o	ō
Low			a	ā		
Diphthongs		ai				
		au				

Consonants

	velar	palatal	retroflex	alveolar	dental	labial
stops	k kh	c ch	ṭ ṭh		t th	p ph
	g gh	j jh	ḍ ḍh		d dh	b bh
nasals	n	n	ṇ	n		m
fricatives	h	ś	ṣ	s		
liquids			ḷ	l r		
semivowels		y				v

Transliteration of the Telugu Alphabet

అ a	ఆ ā	ఇ i	ఈ ī	ఉ u	ఊ ū	
ఎ e	ఏ ē	ఐ ai	ఒ o	ఓ ō	ఔ au	ం (n ṇ m)
క k	ఖ kh	గ g	ఘ gh	ఙ n		
చ c	ఛ ch	జ j	ఝ jh	ఞ n		
ట ṭ	ఠ ṭh	డ ḍ	ఢ ḍh	ణ ṇ		
త t	థ th	ద d	ధ dh	న n		
ప p	ఫ ph	బ b	భ bh	మ m		
య y	ర r	ల l	ళ ḷ	వ v	శ ś	
ష ṣ	స s	హ h	క్ష kṣ			

Translator's Note

This translation of *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha* is intended to introduce the reader to the epic in its entirety, as sung by one master of the tradition. It is also meant to convey, as fully as possible, the spirit, form, and texture of the oral original. The original itself is long, comprising over thirty hours of tapes. In order to provide the reader with a detailed version of the original in an approachable length, I have used two distinct methods of translation. Selected stories and episodes have been translated literally. The remaining stories and episodes have been presented as detailed summaries. Since these two styles read very differently, and serve different functions, I should like briefly to explain the theory of translation behind each.

The translations that are made in the literal style follow the original very closely. Certain concessions have, however, been necessary because of problems inherent in transforming an oral performance in one language into a readable written text in another. The distinction between narrative and dialogue is faithfully kept. Where Gods or Heroes are addressed by several different names, the name used in the translation is the same as the one on the corresponding tape. Dramatic forms of address and exclamations are also translated literally or, rarely, retained in the original. In the few instances of a word or two not being intelligible on the tapes, the omission is indicated by the use of three dots. In the rare instances of the omission of a phrase or more, the omission is discussed in a note. I have, however, omitted the word doubling (described in Chapter V) because it is cumbersome and alien to English style. It does not add substance to the narrative.

Though the original is a combination of prose and verse, I have rendered it entirely into prose (except when a character sings a song). The verse is usually short. Furthermore, it regularly comes at the end of a long Telugu sentence-paragraph in such a way that a distinction between the two would be awkward and would break up the flow of the narrative. This has also necessitated the elimination of the filler words which appear in the rhythmic lines. They do not fit unobtrusively into English prose as they do in the oral original. The result is, perhaps, a slight secularization of the original. Most of the filler words are the names of Gods that are popular in Palnāḍu. Occasionally, where the addition of a word which does not have an equivalent in the original

was deemed necessary for clarity, I have added a suitable word in brackets.

These literal translations are intended to convey to the reader (as nearly as possible) the experience that a member of the audience has as he listens to a performance. Filler words, refrains, and accompaniment give the audience and the singer a needed break. But they would only inhibit the smooth flow of the text when it is read. Similar adjustments would have to be made if the oral text were converted into a Telugu written text.

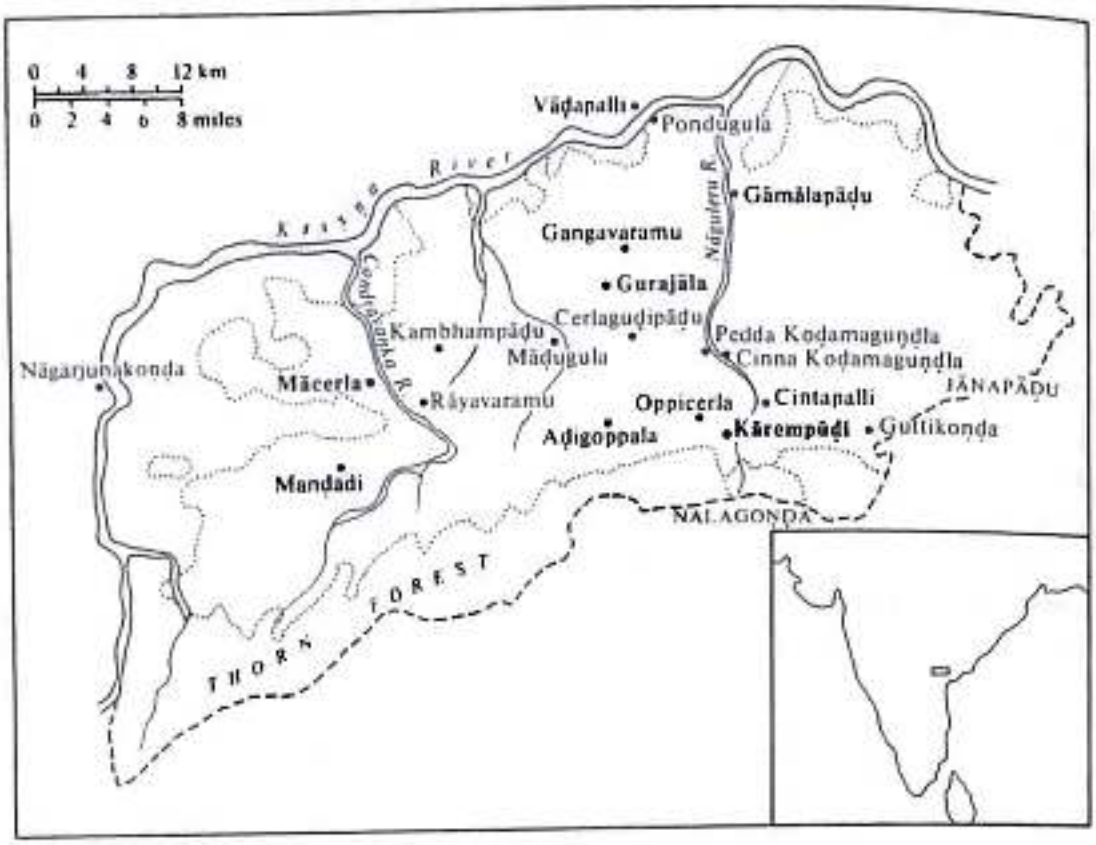
The purpose of the other style of translation is quite different, and the style differs accordingly. Because terms such as 'abridgement', 'condensation', 'retelling' have associations which do not match my intent, I have chosen the term 'detailed summaries'. In these detailed summaries, I have endeavoured to present not only the main action but also the details which are so important for understanding the religious, cultural, and historical dimensions of the epic. A condensation, or abridged retelling, of the stories would have eliminated much of this detail in favour of the narrative–dialogue style of the original. The detailed summaries do not eliminate important details which may appear only in these stories. Much of what is eliminated is formulaic material that is repeated elsewhere in the epic. A further reduction in length is achieved by summarizing, in a few lines, material which in the original is in the form of lengthy dialogues.

The detailed summaries are in the present tense for two reasons. First, it is standard practice to use the present tense for summaries. Though these summaries are more complete than most, they remain summaries, and it is my intention that the reader be fully aware of this at all times. Second, the dramatic quality of the original, with its heavy reliance on dialogue, places the reader in the midst of the action. This temporal proximity is best retained in the summaries by the use of the present tense.

The detailed summaries are indicated in the Contents List, and in the titles of the stories, by an asterisk. All other stories and episodes are literal translations. The decisions as to which stories should be summarized and which should be translated literally were necessarily somewhat arbitrary. Most of the stories that I have translated literally are important for their depiction of events leading up to the final battle of Kāryamapūḍi. This is the core of the epic. It is the story that is known most widely, both in Palnāḍu and in the Telugu country as a whole. The stories and episodes that I have summarized are often more important for their ritual content or because they focus on the origins of certain important Gods or Heroes. Generally speaking, they

contain fewer events and more ritual and religious information. No strict lines can be drawn between the two types, however, and there are exceptions to the general rule. I chose, for example, to translate the entire 'Story of Siriyāla Pāpanna' because it is an important version of a popular South Indian Śaivite story and I felt that it would be particularly useful for purposes of comparison. In one case, 'The Death of Lankanna', I translated part of a story and summarized the remainder. I did so because the first part of the story contains some unique material, while the rest of it is primarily a long series of prayers and battle descriptions.

Certain words have been left untranslated. Among these are Sanskrit word-concepts which have become current in English. Caste names have also been left untranslated. They are explained in the notes. Epithets of Gods and Goddesses are not usually translated. In some prayers and petitions, where several epithets are assigned to the same God or Goddess, I have sometimes translated them and sometimes left them in the original. In the instances where I chose translation, the original is given in the notes, and vice versa.



Map 1. Palnāḍu

Introduction

The oral traditions of non-literate people have never really been exploited as sources for the understanding of Indian culture. Yet, even today, India's population remains predominantly rural and illiterate. The omission is not surprising: even written literature in the regional languages of India is little known outside each individual linguistic area. Although written and oral regional literature both have much to offer, oral literature's potential contribution is perhaps greater. Oral literature is, moreover, unique in its subject-matter. Written literature is most often dominated by Brāhmaṇs and other élites. The ideologies of these élites are often pan-Indian, and they are reasonably well known; oral literature, on the other hand, is more often non-elitist and local in its outlook. Oral literature comprises a wide spectrum of social classes and religious institutions, but it is often controlled by the lowest castes. The conscious ideologies of these people are only sketchily understood.

The present work is based upon a local Telugu oral tradition.[1] It is an addition to a very small but growing number of translations and studies of non-written Indian ideologies.

Telugu traditional literature has received hardly any scholarly attention outside the state of Andhra Pradesh, even though the extant literature dates back almost a thousand years and shows a great diversity of forms and content. A study and translation of a Telugu text might have been a profitable exercise, but, in my view, a translation of a major work of Telugu oral literature appeared both more satisfying and more immediately useful. Written Telugu literature often has at least some roots in Sanskrit culture, whereas Telugu oral literature more often has its roots in the South Indian countryside.

The greater part of the present work is a translation of *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha*. The accompanying study is intended to make that translation more intelligible to the reader and to allow the epic to reveal its own meaning. It includes background information on the setting in which the epic has developed and in which it continues to develop; it also includes an introduction to the epic.

To approach *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha* via a classical and detailed analysis of some element of style or content would be to ignore the rich wholeness of the epic, the appreciation of which would continue to be

restricted to Palnāḍu audiences. Such an approach would be a disservice both to the singers who have nurtured the tradition for many centuries and to the reader. Anyone who is interested in India can profit from an introduction to an alternative to Brāhmaṇ élite ideology. Furthermore, a detailed study of any portion or theme without its matrix might have led to misunderstanding rather than greater knowledge. I chose instead to attempt a rendition of the whole epic into English. The holism of local ideologies, in view of the complexity and divisions in even the smallest Indian villages, seems to be a very elusive entity for outsiders to grasp.

Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha or *Palnāṭivīracaritra* (as it is more often known in published versions) is a Telugu epic. Its audience is regional, but it nevertheless has much to offer to the student and scholar of its wider Indian context. The interaction between 'great' and 'small' traditions, as they have been called, can only be understood by means of an appreciation of both ends of the spectrum. Each end has its own legitimate ways of organizing the world. The apparent unbroken continuity of this epic tradition in the locality of its origins may also offer special insights into the epic process.

The translation of *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha* should be useful to scholars in various disciplines that relate to South India. This Palnāḍu tradition originated in one of the most turbulent and seminal periods of South Indian history. In the twelfth century AD, Rāmānujacārya, Basavēśvara, and their contemporaries were engaged in restructuring South Indian religious life. Politically, the Cālukyas, both Eastern and Western, were giving way to rising new dynasties, the Kākatiyas, Yādavas, and others. Today's oral epic reflects those events, showing their impact on the people in a small region caught between the main religious and political currents.

For the anthropologist and sociologist, the epic provides insights into a local social system. That system is interpreted through the lowest strata of society. Nevertheless, it is not unacceptable to the highest castes. It exposes man–woman relations and male and female heroic ideals. The details of everyday life are not forgotten: food, omens, manners, superstitions, childbirth, birds, animals, trees, and all the complexities of life are portrayed.

Many elements of this epic world will not be new to the Indologist, but the way in which they are organized is often new. A particular Goddess may be known, but how does she relate to local manifestations of Śiva or Viṣṇu, to local Heroes, to women in childbirth, or to sister Goddesses in neighbouring or distant areas? The complexities of rural Indian social and religious life are often bewildering and

seemingly contradictory. The elements of this life also vary from place to place. Nevertheless, *The Epic of Palnāḍu* offers valuable insights even for disparate areas of the sub-continent.

The loose but effective integrative quality of *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha* is compelling. It demonstrates convincingly that the capacity of illiterate Indians to live with seeming contradictions is not a result of a mysterious ability to tolerate those apparent contradictions. More accurately, it indicates their ability to integrate diverse experiences into a consistent local world-view. That local world-view, in the case of *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha*, remains coherent even when adjustments have had to be made in less immediate world-views.

NOTE

1 I use the terms 'tradition' and 'traditional' in a broad sense. They refer to any subject-matter or literary style, whether written or oral, that has been characteristic of a culture over many generations. Where the term refers specifically to 'written' or 'oral' forms, I have qualified them. Usually the subject-matter cannot be clearly defined as one or the other. The literary style may, however, be more characteristically oral or written.

Part I

THE EPIC IN ITS LOCAL SETTING

Chapter I

Palnāḍu Tradition in Telugu Literature

The *Epic of Palnāḍu* is a living Telugu literary tradition, known throughout the Telugu country. The range of media through which it is available has made it accessible to Telugu-speaking people of virtually every level of society and from every cultural background. It can be found in the form of modern verse; unedited palm-leaf manuscripts in both classical and folk metres; edited scholarly publications based on palm-leaf manuscripts; references in scholarly and non-scholarly histories; motion pictures; elementary school reading texts; novels; stage plays; radio plays; dramatic monologues; rice-transplanting songs; *burra katha* (popular entertainments derived from a folk model); books of stories for adults; children's stories; narrative songs sung by *Piccaguṇṭlu* (a caste of itinerant narrative singers); articles in weekly magazines; paintings; sculpture; satirical essays; local common knowledge; and extended oral narratives. It is still sung by *Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyavantulu* (men learned in the heroic history of Palnāḍu) who have long been associated with the local religious-hero cult in the region of the tradition's origin, Palnāḍu.[1] The range of levels on which this tradition can be understood reflects the diversity of the media. The tradition is Telugu national epic, history, sacred religious lore, pure entertainment, and more.

Some basic elements of the story remain much the same in the various media and on the different levels of interpretation. But, as might be expected, changes, both subtle and blatant, conscious and unconscious, are made to suit the tradition to the medium and its objectives. The requirements for a popular and financially successful motion picture are very different from those for the sacred literature of a local religious cult. Much that is most meaningful to the audience of a local epic is of no interest to a nationalistic audience. A Brāhmaṇ scholar may be offended by what is commonplace to a Māla (untouchable) or a Reḍḍi (yeoman farmer or agrarian lord). The tradition is one, but the manifestations are many.

It seems likely that the epic has had an unbroken oral history of at least 800 years, and it has had a written existence for several centuries at least. Nevertheless, much of the widespread contemporary, scholarly and popular interest in Palnāḍu tradition may be traced to the

beginning of the twentieth century when the first printed versions appeared. C. P. Brown, the great scholar and patron of the Telugu language, collected several manuscripts of *Palnāṭivīracaritra* in the mid-nineteenth century and frequently referred to them in his dictionaries. The first printed version, however, was edited by Akkirāju Umākāntam and published in 1911. Umākāntam's *Palnāṭivīracritra*, as most recently reprinted in 1955, includes two extended introductions, the first written for the 1911 edition and the second for that of 1938.[2] The introductions, partly in English and partly in Telugu, cover a broad range of topics relevant to the tradition. Umākāntam established approximate dates for the events remembered in the tradition. As a native of Guttikoṇḍa, a village in Palnāḍu, he included information about the hero cult that is centred in Kārempūḍi, a village some eight miles from his home. Important events in the epic take place in Guttikoṇḍa, and Umākāntam must have been fascinated with the stories from his youth. It was not, however, historical dates or local origins that gained the most attention. Two other topics covered in the introductions have had the greatest impact in Telugu country.

Umākāntam established the *Palnāṭivīracaritra* as a heroic epic to which the Telugu people could look with pride. Just as peoples in other parts of the world had their great heroes of the past, the Telugu people could look to these heroes in their own past. He also established to his own satisfaction that *Palnāṭivīracaritra* was written by a Telugu poet of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, Śrīnāthuḍu. The epic was important to a Telugu-speaking people in search of a Telugu identity and local models in a past that seemed too often dominated by foreign rulers and adopted foreign models for behaviour. The question of authorship was equally significant. The establishment of *Palnāṭivīracaritra* as the work of a great classical poet made it not only respectable but of immense interest to the Telugu literati. Interest in Palnāḍu heroes as 'national' heroes and in *Palnāṭivīracaritra* as the work of Śrīnāthuḍu increased the epic's value in the eyes of historians and among the literary élite, but it also diverted attention from the roots of the tradition itself.

The significance of Umākāntam's assignment of authorship to Śrīnāthuḍu must be appreciated in the context of the history of Telugu literature. Generally speaking, Telugu literature may be classified as written or non-written: literature that is produced by the literate classes and literature that is a product of the non-literate classes. Written literary tradition is divided into two streams that have been recognized from early times. The first, called *mārga*, is strongly influenced by Sanskrit in both form and content. The Telugu *Mahābhār-*

ata, particularly the first portion written by Nannaya in the eleventh century, set a standard that has been followed by subsequent *mārga* poets up to the present day. As codified in two subsequent works, the *Appakaviyam*, a treatise on metre, and the *Bālavyākaraṇamu*, a grammar, it set the standard by which the Telugu literary establishment has judged the worth of poetry, both past and present.[3] By this standard, poetry that adheres to the *mārga* style is great poetry. A contemporary poet cannot hope to surpass or equal it, but he must constantly seek to emulate it.

Poetry that does not adhere to the *mārga* standard is, at best, considered second rate. Called *dēśi*, its inspiration and form are closer to those of spoken Telugu and oral literary models. Though certainly not free from Sanskrit influence and not strictly in the spoken dialect, *dēśi* literature is relatively accessible to the non-scholar. Much of the *dēśi* literature is associated with *bhakti*[4] cults of one kind or another. Early Vīra Śaivite literature was composed in this style.[5] Although both *dēśi* and *mārga* literature were patronized in the courts, *mārga* literature was more often favoured. *Mārga* literature reflected the powerful influence of Sanskrit culture; *dēśi* literature reflected the impact of local oral culture.

Oral folk literature falls altogether outside this recognized binary classification. Although ignored by the Telugu literati, Telugu oral literature comprises a wide range of styles and forms, of which the various types of extended narrative songs are one of the most vigorous and highly developed branches. While both *mārga* and *dēśi* literature are primarily written by high-caste persons, particularly Brāhmaṇs, oral literature is primarily sung by persons of low caste, particularly by Mālas and Mādigas—the two great Telugu untouchable castes—and by Śaivite *Jangams*.[6]

The palm-leaf manuscripts of *Palnāṭivīracaritra* that were edited by Umākāntam were in a metre called *manjari dvipada*. This is a verse form well adapted to singing. It is a simpler form of *dvipada*, a *dēśi* metre that has been used to render the *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as other Sanskrit works into Telugu. *Dvipada* was also employed by the Vīra Śaiva school that flourished in the thirteenth century. While not given the respect accorded to the *mārga* metres, *dvipada* is still thought to possess its own charm and usefulness even though it lacks superlative literary qualities.

The manuscripts that Umākāntam was able to secure were of uneven quality and credited to several different authors. Moreover, he did not find a complete manuscript of the entire *Palnāṭivīracaritra*. He did, however, discover a story that accounted for the absence of a

complete manuscript in any one place. This story credited the *Palnāṭivīracaritra* to Śrīnāthuḍu and accounted for its being in the possession of Mālas and other non-Brāhmaṇs. The following is a translation of the story published by Umākāntam:

It is said that his [Śrīnāthuḍu's] health was ruined because he was a libertine in his youth. He moved to Palnāḍu and, while living in a village there, went to Mācerla on the banks of the Candravanka river. When he had bathed in the river and had an audience with Cennakēśava, his disease was somewhat eased.

That night Cennakēśava manifested himself in a dream, told him to write the history of his servants, the valorous heroes of Palnāḍu, and to dedicate it to him. Then he disappeared.

When Śrīnāthuḍu awoke, he was pleased with the import of the dream. When he had fully comprehended the history that had been flourishing in the hearts of the Palnāḍu people for a long time, and which remains today, he began to write the book. Since he was suffering from disease and an old man, he did not have the strength to write, so he employed seven disciples as scribes. Sitting in the Cennakēśava temple, he composed, in two months, the entire book which is about as big as the *Bhāratam*.[7] As soon as the book was finished, he was healed of his disease.

Later his mind was shaken and he returned to his former inclinations. Cennakēśava became angry and did not appear to him in the daytime as he always did every day. Instead he came in a dream and said, 'Because you are a sinner, I cannot accept the book. It will become the possession of Mālas and Mādigas.' Then he disappeared.

The next day Śrīnāthuḍu awoke and was very disturbed by the dream. Seeing no profit in the book that he had gone to such pains to write, if the God would not accept it, he tore it up and threw away the pieces. The Mālas and Mādigas found the pieces and picked them up.[8]

Akkirāju Umākāntam does not claim that this story is necessarily true, but the story reveals some of the prejudices and assumptions that help explain the importance of his assignment of authorship to Śrīnāthuḍu.

An underlying assumption among Telugu scholars and, to a lesser extent, many others is that no one but a learned scholar is capable of composing any kind of poetry or song. If a beggar sings a song in his own words and style, it is obviously only his corrupt, inaccurate, and ungrammatical rendering of something that was once written by a Brāhmaṇ or other high-class poet. If the *Palnāṭivīracaritra* is sung by Mālas, it is assumed that they must have had it from a literate poet and then corrupted it.[9]

Śrīnāthuḍu, a Brāhmaṇ, is regarded as one of the greatest and most original classical Telugu poets.[10] But, like some other classical poets, he has also become a folk character with a fully developed personality. Popularly he is considered to have been a rake and a libertine, but he is

also credited with the authorship of many literary works which fit into the *dēśi* classification. *Palnāṭivīracaritra* is one of these, so too is *Kāṭama Rāju Katha*,[11] also a Telugu epic, and many stray verses are said to be his too. The need to assign a poem to a well-known author can be understood in an environment in which a work might often be accepted or rejected on the basis of its supposed authorship rather than on its inherent worth. It is doubly important to make such an ascription if those who possess the poem are automatically deemed incapable of composing any piece of literature.

Telugu literati themselves do not, of course, accept all these ascriptions of authorship. No scholar has seriously argued, for example, that the manuscripts of *Kāṭama Rāju Katha* which are now available were actually written by Śrīnāthuḍu as some manuscripts say they were. On the other hand, where verses are of obvious quality, and approach *mārga* standards, these ascriptions not only become plausible but the preconceived notions of literary scholars absolutely require that the verses have such an origin. This is the case with some of the stray verses (*cāṭu padyams*).

The episode quoted above not only satisfies the requirements of authorship but it also explains how the lowest of people came into possession of the manuscripts. It is a folk story that is still told today, but it is one which, in spirit, meshes perfectly with the prejudices and preconceived notions of Telugu society at large.

The *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, as edited by Umākāntam, is only a fraction of the tradition available in manuscript. But it is more literary than some other manuscripts, and it includes an introductory section crediting Śrīnāthuḍu with its authorship. The arguments used by Umākāntam to support his theories of authorship are not within the scope of this book, nor can we pause here for even a brief outline of the scholarly debate which followed his conclusions. A detailed summary of the debate may be found in Korlapāṭi Śrīrāmamūrti's *Śrīnāthuḍu* (1971).[12] It should be noted, however, that no serious analysis of all the manuscript sources has ever been made. Until such a study has been made, further discussion of the authorship of the manuscript versions will be at best unproductive.[13]

The real significance of Umākāntam's assignment of authorship to Śrīnāthuḍu is that it introduced *Palnāṭivīracaritra* into the literary consciousness of the Telugu people. As a printed text supposedly written by one of the greatest Telugu poets, it acquired recognition and status. In editing it Umākāntam made many 'corrections' in the text in order to make it more compatible with his own literary standards and with those of his readers. These changes were justified on

the grounds that errors had crept into the manuscripts during their sojourn with the unlettered. Some of the changes were grammatical and metrical; others reorganized the manuscript material, eliminating loose ends and repetitions. Sometimes he substituted Sanskrit names for Telugu ones; the courtesan, Sabbai (a Telugu name), for example, becomes Śyāmāngi (a Sanskrit name) in Umākāntam's edition.

Through the efforts of Umākāntam and others like him, the *Palnāṭivīracaritra* left the hands of the Mālas and other low-caste people who had been its custodians in a restricted local setting. It entered the world of the printed word and a developing Telugu consciousness. Umākāntam also published a collection of prose stories that fill in parts of the tradition which are excluded from his published edition of the manuscript. The stories may also have been based upon manuscripts but they may equally have been drawn from oral traditions which he had contacted in Palnāḍu.

Umākāntam's publication of *Palnāṭivīracaritra* and *Palnāṭi Vīrula Kathalu*[14] (the title of the collection of stories) was followed by other works on the Heroes of Palnāḍu, a body of literature that must by now number hundreds of individual works. In 1930 Cilukūri Virabhadrarāvu published a novelization of the tradition in two volumes, entitled *Nāyakurālidarpamu*[15] (Nāyakurālu's Pride). This novel and Umākāntam's *Palnāṭivīracaritra* provided the source material for Mahammad Nājar's *Palnāṭi Yuddhamu*,[16] which was written and then memorized for singing in a style adapted from that of a traditional narrative song employed by certain groups of low-caste itinerant musicians. The style is known as *burra katha*. Nājar was commissioned by the local Communist party to write his *Palnāṭi Yuddhamu* for political purposes. *Burra katha* allows the singers to interrupt the narrative with jokes and political comment that are not strictly relevant to the subject of the story. *Palnāṭi Yuddhamu* was Nājar's second *burra katha*. Written in about 1950, it is still one of the most popular stories in his repertoire and in the repertoires of those who have followed in his footsteps.[17] It has contributed to the development of *burra katha* as a popular form of entertainment among both rural and urban audiences. Other important adaptations of Palnāḍu tradition include two films. The first was produced in the late forties and the second in the early sixties; both are entitled *Palnāṭi Yuddhamu*.

The second important scholarly publication of Palnāḍu tradition was that of Pingaḷi Lakṣmīkāntam, whose edition, entitled *Palanātivīracaritra* (an alternate spelling of *Palnāṭivīracaritra*), was published in 1961.[18] This edition includes the portion credited to Śrīnāthuḍu and other stories whose authorship he assigns to two otherwise unknown

poets, Mallayya and Koṇḍayya. Though more comprehensive than Umākāntam's *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, it omits several important episodes that are found in Umākāntam's *Palnāṭi vīrula Kathulu*. Lakṣmīkāntam's edition provides a more complete, and thus more satisfying, version of the tradition than does Umākāntam's edition, but it shows many of the same and similar prejudices, corruptions, and limitations.

Lakṣmīkāntam mentions a number of problems that he found in dealing with the manuscripts, and he suggests that he made 'corrections'. He does not however, indicate where and what kind of changes he has made:

> In the palm-leaf manuscripts, sixty to seventy per cent of the sentences are not syntactically correct and many words are not spelt correctly. The meanings of many strange words are not known. Many lines that appear in one part are repeated out of context in other places.
>
> .....
>
> While editing this book, in so far as was possible, I did not make the needed corrections in metre. I retained the peculiar characteristics of the book and its colloquial language as they were. Where sentences were unclear and broken, in order to make them understandable and because it is fruitless to write poetry that cannot be understood, I joined the unconnected sentences. Because it would be an error to leave portions unwritten, I filled in the text where letters were missing.[19]

Velcheru Narayana Rao has recently shown that Lakṣmīkāntam erred because he treated the manuscripts as literary texts. Because he assumed that the texts were once written in standard Telugu, and later corrupted, he himself actually corrupted the manuscripts, which had an oral origin, in an effort to correct them. Lacking the conceptual framework to deal with oral literature, Lakṣmīkāntam made the same mistakes that Umākāntam had made.[20] He also revived the notion that *Palnāṭivīracaritra* was originally written by Śrīnāthuḍu. His version was soon accepted as standard.

Later authors of stories, novels, plays, and other works on the subject seem to have taken Lakṣmīkāntam's *Palanāṭivīracaritra* as their primary authority. The last significant work with which I am acquainted that does not give evidence of primary reliance on Lakṃīkāntam is a novel by Kētavarapu Kriṣṇamūrti entitled *Palnāṭivīrabhāratamu*.[21] It was published in 1961, only eight months after Lakṣmīkāntam's edition. Kriṣṇamūrti apparently relies upon Umākāntam and upon unspecified oral and/or manuscript sources. His version includes several brief episodes which are not found in any other published material. A prose version by Reṇṭāla Gōpālakriṣṇa (1971)[22] relies primarily on Lakṣmīkāntam, but Gōpālakriṣṇa claims to

have drawn on local tradition as well as on other literary works. He, like many others who have written plays and other works based upon Palnāḍu tradition, is a native of Palnāḍu. Interest in new books about the Heroes of Palnāḍu shows no signs of diminishing. When I was doing field research in 1974, 'Ciṭṭi Bābu's' *Palnāṭivīrabhāratam* (1973)[23] was available at railway and bus station book counters all over Andhra. The book stresses that the heroic history of Palnāḍu is the common property of all the people of Andhra Pradesh.

Although Umākāntam's introduction refers to the local context and to the people who have been responsible for the preservation of the oral tradition for several centuries, scholarly preoccupation with the question of Śrīnāthuḍu's authorship and popular acceptance of his authorship and the authority of Lakṣmīkāntam's and Umākāntam's editions has tended to divert attention from the Palnāḍu environment itself. It is there that the epic originated and there that it continues to grow. It has also diverted attention from the many perishable but extant manuscripts that remain unedited and unpublished. Birudurāju Rāmarāju who, in his *Telugu Jānapada Gēya Sāhityamu* (1958), gives summaries of hundreds of essentially oral, Telugu, narratives provides a good summary of the epic. He does not, however, challenge the deletions of Umākāntam, nor does he show that he seriously studied any other manuscripts or that he considered local variants of the tradition.[24]

For his Śrī Vēṅkaṭēśvara University dissertation, 'Telugu Vīragathakavitvamu' (1968),[25] Tangirāla Vēṅkaṭa Subbārāvu examined a number of manuscripts in *dvipada* and compared the tradition found in them with that of the published versions. Among the other sources used by Subbārāvu was a version, in classical metre, written by Mudigoṇḍa Vīrabhadrakavi in 1862.[26] Entitled *Palnāṭi Vīrula Bhāgavatamu*—another commonly used name for the tradition and one that emphasizes the equation of the main hero, Brahma Nāyuḍu, with Viṣṇu and Kriṣṇa—this work includes much material that was not used by Umākāntam or Lakṣmīkāntam. Robert Sewell was also introduced to this poem when he toured Palnāḍu in 1879. His long summary of it, printed as an appendix to his *Antiquarian Remains of the Madras Presidency* (1882),[27] is the fullest rendering of Palnāḍu tradition in the English language to date. Subbārāvu's discussion of the various manuscripts in *dvipada* and of Vīrabhadrakavi's version is a significant advance towards the cataloguing, editing, and eventual publication of these important works.

Subbārāvu made another significant step: he went to the source of the tradition, Palnāḍu itself, and to other parts of the Telugu country

that are intimately involved with the tradition. The results are to be found in his dissertation. In addition, between 1969 and 1971, he published a series of popular articles in the Telugu weeklies, *Āndhra Prabha* and *Āndhra Jyôti*. These show an interest in and sensitivity to the tradition as it exists in Palnāḍu today. They explore the geographical and archaeological sites associated with the Heroes. He has also discussed the role of the singers who perform at the yearly festival in Palnāḍu and the nature of the oral literary tradition.[28]

In an article in *Bhārati* (a Telugu literary magazine), Subbārāvu broaches the question of what 'authoritative' scholarly editions have really done with the epic tradition itself as found in oral and manuscript versions. Subbārāvu gives a different version of one of the most popular episodes in the entire cycle, 'Ala Rāju Rāyabāramu'—'The Mission of Ala Rāju' or, as it is called in the version that I have translated, 'The Mission to Gurajāla'. In his version, Brahma Nāyuḍu, the central hero of the epic, said to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu, sends Ala Rāju on a dangerous mission to the enemy's capital with the clear intention of having him killed and thereby satisfying an old grudge.[29] The same story in Lakṣmīkāntam's edition omits key passages. By these omissions Brahma Nāyuḍu is not only rendered innocent of the young man's death but the impression is given that Brahma Nāyuḍu sent him because he was least likely to be harmed by the enemy. The version published by Subbārāvu is to be found both in the oral versions that I collected and in the manuscripts that he surveyed. This is not the only instance of 'elitist' or 'scholarly' tampering with local tradition; but it is sufficient to show that both the edited versions that have appeared so far must be regarded as revised, amended, and suspect. They are not to be regarded as faithful expositions of the epic as it developed in its original and native context.[30]

While Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu has attended more faithfully to both oral and manuscript sources than did his predecessors, he too has been misled by a written literary bias. He has never seriously questioned the view accepted among Telugu scholars that the written epic was primary and the oral epic derivative. He has held to the opinion that *Palnāṭivīracaritra* was written by Śrīnāthuḍu; he has suggested, that perhaps it was another Śrīnāthuḍu instead of the renowned poet.[31] Though he interviewed traditional singers of *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha*, men who knew the tradition far better than any of the scholars, men whose oral versions were more complete than the manuscripts, he did not record their stories. Instead, he has often repeated statements to the effect that the epic could not be found whole in one place, a view bolstered by the story of how Śrīnāthuḍu came to tear up his creation.

Furthermore, his written literary orientation has apparently led him to regard oral versions as second rate, not because they are less vigorous, complete, or interesting, but because they are not of a recognized and consistent poetic style.

Approaches to Palnāḍu tradition have, hitherto, tended to remove it from the hands of low caste, outcaste, and beggar and sought to restore it to its supposed Brāhmaṇ fathers. The process has rendered *Palnāṭivīracaritra* more acceptable to literary taste and more in tune with standards of Brāhmaṇ culture. Concurrently, popular publications have tended to elevate a local tradition to the level of Telugu national epic. The attitudes that have prompted this emphasis are exemplified in a quotation from Ciṭṭi Bābu's *Palnāṭivīrabhāratamu*: 'Whatever be the case, it is the good fortune of the Āndhra people that this great, universal, heroic knowledge that remained only in bits and pieces has been found. What is to be regretted is that this excellent story was accessible only to the people of low caste. It is saddening to think about it.'[32] Nowhere in the literature is reference made to any contribution by low-caste people.

All the critical approaches from Umākāntam to Subbārāvu have lacked the concept of a creative oral singer. They have therefore also lacked the concept of a literature in which the oral contribution takes precedence over the written. Surprisingly, no one to date has ever analysed a Telugu manuscript from the point of view of modern oral literary theory as developed in the west. In his *Telugulō Kavitā Viplavāla Svarupam* (1978), however, Velcheru Narayana Rao has at least raised the question whether certain genres of Telugu literature are fundamentally written or oral. After examining some published Telugu heroic stories, including *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, his considered opinion is that their structure has an oral origin. In spite of heavy handed editing at times, the true origins of the stories are visible.[33]

It is to be hoped that before long someone will undertake the re-evaluation and careful publication of some at least of the manuscripts that appear to derive from oral performance rather than written composition. It will bring about the removal of a veil of prejudice that has for centuries obscured the cultural and religious contributions of the majority of the Telugu people. Such a critical examination of manuscript sources is not, however, the subject of this study.

The focus here is on the epic as it exists today in Palnāḍu. The source material is neither old nor fragmented. It lives in the men who are the guardians of the tradition in its fullness. Though some of them possess manuscripts that contain small portions of the tradition, the real epic, as they know it, resides 'in their guts'. This tradition is to be seen in the

setting in which these men live; the setting in which the *Epic of Palnāḍu* had its inception and growth. The epic must be appreciated as a function of the environment, singers, and their inherited tradition.

In focusing on the epic as a living tradition in Palnāḍu, we study the dynamic role of a traditional, oral literature in its local, rural setting. Because the repositories of the *Epic of Palnāḍu* are living men, not decaying manuscripts, the tradition must be regarded as a living process. Conservatism and innovation are integral parts of a living oral process. The environment, singers, and the inherited story interact in the formulation of a world-view that is locally valid and, more important, culturally strengthening.

Notes

1 This list should not be taken as exhaustive; it is merely illustrative of the many avenues through which a traditional story can make an impact in a modern Indian language.

2 Śrīnātha, *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, ed. Akkirāju Umākāntam (Madras: Vāviḷḷa Rāmasvāmi Śāstrulu and Sons, 1955).

3 Velcheru Narayana Rao, 'The Influence of Marxism on the Poetry of Sri Sri', *Marxist Influence and South Asian Literatures*, Carlo Cappolla, ed. (East Lansing: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1974), p. 143.

4 Good examples of this type of literature are the many *Śatakas* (collections of 100 or, more commonly, 108 poems on a single theme) written in honour of particular deities.

5 The best-known examples are *Basavapurāṇamu* and *Paṇḍitārādhyacaritra* by Pālkuriki Sōmanātha, written in the thirteenth century.

6 *Jangams* are minstrel-priests of the Śaivite sect known as Vīra Śaivism.

7 *Bhāratam: Mahābhārata.*

8 Śrīnātha, *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, pp. 69–70 of the Introduction to the 1911 edition. Āliseṭṭi Gāleyya, a singer of the tradition, told me virtually the same story in 1974 when I was recording in Palnāḍu. He, however, said that the helpers were Lambāḍis, a semi-itinerant caste that has settled in Andhra Pradesh in the past two or three centuries.

9 I have often found this position taken by both uneducated and educated. It is also implicit in most of the scholarly work on local narratives.

10 Śrīnāthuḍu was a poet in the Reḍḍi courts of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. See M. Somasekhara Sarma, *History of the Reḍḍi Kingdoms* (Waltair: Andhra University, 1948), pp. 515–31 for a good introduction to Śrīnāthuḍu.

11 Prabhakarasastri, Veturi, ed., *Kāṭamarāju Katha*, intro. by M. Somasekhara Sarma (Madras: Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, 1953). Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu, *Kāṭamarāju Kathalu*, 2 vols. (Haidarābādu: Andhra Pradēś Sāhitya Akāḍami, 1976 and 1977). It is also known as *Yādavarāju Katha*.

12 Korlapāṭi Śrirāmmamūrti, *Śrīnāthuḍu* (Guntur: Kajābhārati, 1971), pp. 175–240.

13 In 1974 Tūmāṭi Doṇappa, then Professor of Telugu at Andhra University, Waltair, told me that in his opinion the language used in the manuscripts commonly assigned to Śrīnāthuḍu does not seem to be earlier than the seventeenth century. Śrīnāthuḍu died in the early fifteenth. If true, this would not necessarily prove that he never wrote a version of the epic, but it would indicate that the question of authorship is more complex than those who have taken sides on the issue have admitted.

14 Akkirāju Umākāntam, ***Palnāṭi Vīrula Kathalu*** (Madras: Macmillan and Co., 1921, second revised edition).

15 Cilukūri Vīrabhadrarāvu, *Nāyakurālidarpamu* (Pithāpuram: Śrī Vēnkaṭa Pārvatīśvara Kavulu, 1930).

16 Nājar, *Palnāṭi Yuddhamu* (Vijayavāḍa: Janatā Pracuraṇālayam, 1959).

17 Information given to me orally by Nājar in 1974.

18 Śrīnāthuḍu, Mallayya, and Kondayya, ***Palanāṭivīracaritra***, Piṅgaḷi Lakṣmikāntam and Avasarāla Sūryarāvu, ed. (Vijayavāḍa: Viśālāndhra Pracuranālayam, 1961).

19 Ibid., pp. xiv, xvi–xvii.

20 Velcheru Narayana Rao, *Telugulō Kavitā Viplavāla Svarupam* (Vijayavāḍa: Viśālāndhra Pracuraṇālayam, 1978), pp. 22–6.

21 Kētavarapu Kriṣṇamūrti, *Palnāṭi Vīra Bhāratamu (Nāyakurālu Nāgamma)* (Rājamanḍri: Kāḷahasti Tammarāvu and Sons, 1961). '*Bhāratam*' is the Telugu name for the great Indian epic that is generally known in the West as the *Mahābhārata*. Because of the immense size of the epic, the term '*bhāratam*' is used in Telugu to designate anything of great proportions. But it is particularly associated with *Palnāḍu* tradition because of similarities in plot and significance between the Telugu epic and the pan-Indian epic.

22 Reṇṭāla Gōpālakriṣṇa, *Palnāṭivīracaritra* (Vijayavāḍa: Jayanti Publications, 1971).

23 Ciṭṭi Bābu, ***Palnāṭivīrabhāratam*** (Vijayavāḍa: Book Trust Bureau, 1973).

24 Birudurāju Rāmarāju, *Telugu Jānapadagēya Sāhityamu* (Haidarābād: Andhra Racayitala Sangham, 1958), pp. 159–98.

25 Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu, 'Telugu Vīragathakavitvamu' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vēnkaṭēśvara University, 1968).

26 I am not sure whether this was ever published. It may have been, but Subbārāvu and others refer to manuscript versions.

27 Robert Sewell, *Lists of the Antiquarian Remains in the Presidency of Madras*, vol. I (Madras: Government Press, 1882, Appendix A, pp. i–xi.

28 See bibliography for complete list of these articles.

29 Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu, 'Alarācamallugāri Rāyabāramu', *Bhārati*, Apr. 1971, pp. 11–16.

30 One anti-Brāhman writer, Tripuranēni Rāmasvāmi Caudari, carried the process of Sanskritization of Palnāḍu tradition to an extreme. He composed an alternative *Bhagavadgīta* based upon the epic. After equating each important character from *The Epic of Palnāḍu* with a character from the *Mahābhārata*, he wrote a dialogue between Brahma Nāyuḍu—the principal hero and avatar of Viṣṇu—and his son, Bālacandruḍu. In this dialogue, which he called *Bhagavadgīta*, he endeavoured to show the superiority of local culture over Sanskrit–Brāhmaṇical culture. In doing so, however, he failed to appreciate the local culture itself. Instead of using local culture and literary standards to attack

Brāhmaṇism directly, he first Sanskritized a local tradition and then tried to demonstrate its superiority. Instead of attempting to revise the cultural priorities set by the Brāhmaṇs, he tended to retain them and sought to replace the caste which occupied the top rung. Kavirāju [Tripuranēni Rāmasvāmi], *Bhagavadgīta* (Tenāli: Saraḷā Publications, 1971, reprint of the original written some time in the 1930s).

31 Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu, 'Telugu Vīragathakavitvamu', p. 577.

32 pp. 204–5.

33 Cf. note 20.

Chapter II

Palnāḍu

Stony ground, small-time gods,
Snake River water, slabs of slate,
Serpents, scorpions, millet and sorghum:
Little villages of the Palnāḍu country.[1]

Rocky hills and thorn forest on two sides, and the Krishna (Kriṣṇa) River on the other two, form a natural boundary around Palnāḍu. They set it apart from the surrounding countryside and give it a regional identity. Within Palnāḍu, the grazing lands and poorer fields of red soil are a product of the weathered granite and gneiss of the surrounding hills. The red soil is fertile but often unproductive. Unless irrigated, it does not retain sufficient moisture to produce anything but the poorest crops of castor beans, peanuts, or the least desirable millets. The more productive fields have a heavy black soil that retains moisture well, but it often lies thinly over the underlying parental strata of slate and limestone. The traditional staple crops are varieties of millet and sorghum. Hardy and nutritious but low yielding, they are scorned wherever the more favoured paddy can be cultivated. These cereals are supplemented by legumes that are intercropped. The chief cash crops of today, and of the recent past, are short-staple cotton and chilis.

A visitor to Palnāḍu will immediately be struck by the preponderance of rock. Palnāḍu is, indeed, a land of rock and stone. Fields are separated by dry stone walling. The rocks of which they are made have been picked up or dug out of the ground to allow for its cultivation. The sedimentary rock comes in a variety of colours: black, red, grey, and creamy. The houses are the colour of the stone that is nearest at hand. Houses, temples, cattlesheds, water tanks, threshing rollers, inscriptions from the past, memorial stones, idols, streets, pillars, mortars, pestles, and benches, where old men while away the hours smoking hand-rolled cigars of home-grown tobacco—all are made of stone. Streams cut their way through the strangely unfossiliferous Cuddapah sedimentary system. The Kriṣṇa River penetrates the Archaean gneiss. Goats skilfully crop what vegetation they can find between the rocks and the thorns. Icons representing Gods of local

importance are carved out of (or simply discovered in) the local stone. They are housed in temples of stone which is sometimes polished to mirror brightness and sometimes merely piled up.[2]

This rocky land, known as Palnāḍu, is an ancient division of the Telugu country. Lying near the geographic centre of the contemporary Indian state of Andhra Pradesh (Āndhra Pradēś), it occupies an area where the three great cultural and territorial divisions of the Telugu land meet. Neither culturally nor geographically does it fit easily into any one of the divisions. The Kriṣṇā River, one of the great eastward-flowing rivers of peninsular India, forms the northern and western boundary that separates Palnāḍu from Telengāṇa. Telengāṇa is that portion of the former Hyderabad (Haiderabādu) State that is now incorporated into the Telugu linguistic state of Andhra Pradesh. The Nallamala Hills stand between Palnāḍu and the rich coastal and deltaic districts to the east. They also separate it from Rāyalasīma, the dry, rocky country to the south and south-west.

Palnāḍu has at various times been politically dominated by rulers from each of these three areas of the Telugu country. Often it has served as a buffer zone between them. Inscriptions belonging to dynasties from each of these three great regions of Andhra Pradesh abound: the Cālukya-Cōḷas of the coastal districts, the Kākatiyas from Telengāṇa, and the Vijayanagara Rājas from Rāyalasīma and Karnāṭaka. These are but the most important dynasties that have dominated Palnāḍu during the past millennium. Their marks remain in the Palnāḍu stone. There are also mosques, evidence of the time when Palnāḍu was a part of the Islamic kingdoms of Golconda and of Hyderabad. Moreover, in many villages there are also Christian churches. Large three-vatted stone indigo-processing works recall the days when the East India Company and its Raj encouraged the production of blue dye.

Palnāḍu is now a *tāluk* (an administrative subdivision), of Guntur (Guṇṭūru) District. (A district is a major division of a state.) Guntur is one of the wealthiest agricultural districts in India. It is particularly famous for its tobacco. The Telugu people, however, make a clear distinction between Guntur District proper and Palnāḍu. A stray verse reflects a common response at the mention of Palnāḍu:

> The gentleman stays away from Palnāḍu.
> There the Celestial Courtesan must spin cotton;
> The Richest of Men must plough;
> The God of Love must eat sorghum gruel.[3]

Guntur District is now famous for its wealth and its place in the cultural

heartland of the emerging pan-Telugu culture. Palnāḍu, on the other hand, has been reviled for its poverty, backwardness, rocky soil, and weather. The weather station in Reṇṭacintala consistently records the highest temperatures in Andhra Pradesh and, perhaps, South India. The contrast between Palnāḍu and the rest of the district probably largely accounts for the bad name it has acquired. Palnāḍu is no poorer, rockier, or drier than many neighbouring areas in Telengāṇa and Rāyalasīma. The inhabitants themselves often look almost contemptuously at the country across the Kṛiṣṇa River in Telengāṇa. Palnāḍu has been comparatively wealthy—at least in the past century.

At the north-west corner of Palnāḍu are two great monuments of local stone. One, of creamy greenish marble, is the ancient Buddhist site called Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. It stands above a valley that was continuously occupied from the Stone Age until about a decade ago. Dating back to the beginning of the Christian era, the Buddhist ruins have received a great deal of outside attention since their excavation by archaeologists. But they are monuments to a forgotten past; local consciousness retains hardly a trace of remembrance except what has been learned from archaeological excavations. The remains of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, once one of the great Buddhist centres of ancient India, are now preserved by a museum on an island in the lake behind Nāgārjunsāgar Dam. The dam itself is a monument to modern technology. Built by the Indian government, it first became operational for water storage and irrigation in the late 1960s. Work on installation of the electrical generators and extension of the irrigation system continued into the 1980s. It is a monument for the future.

The materials used in the construction of the dam are largely of local origin: fine quality granite from Palnāḍu and near-by Telengāṇa and cement made from locally quarried limestone about 13 miles away. But in spite of the tens of thousands of local and itinerant unskilled labourers who were employed in its construction,[4] Nāgārjunasāgar Dam is almost as alien to the people of Palnāḍu as the now inundated ancient ruins.[5] The huge dam is a product of an alien technology. It is on a scale that dwarfs the modest human scale of the monuments in Palnāḍu proper. Yet its impact is being felt. Irrigation water now finds its way through the dry, rocky plains of Palnāḍu. Gradually, over the past decade, it has changed the agricultural landscape from a dry land into an irrigated economy. The traditional staples, sorghum and millet, are in many areas giving way to paddy. High-yielding varieties of cotton are supplanting older, hardy, but low-yielding varieties. Chilis have become an even more dependable crop now that the farmers have the option of adding judicious amounts of water when needed.

With better transportation, stone products are finding wider markets in the form of cement, lime, and slate that is used for flooring and other construction purposes. Both the landscape and the social, economic, and religious fabric of the area are slowly being changed. But the future, as represented by the dam, has not really supplanted the past. It is not the dominant source of social organization or of cultural inspiration in Palnāḍu. During the period following the decline of Buddhism and before the rise of modern technology, other movements touched the people of Palnāḍu. Their monuments are found in every village.

In the heart of Palnāḍu is the town of Gurajāla. With a population of about 11,000 persons,[6] it is the administrative headquarters of the *tāluk*. In addition to the *tāluk* government offices, Gurajāla has two cinema halls, two restaurants, two or three coffee shops, a few temples, two churches, a bank, a post office, fertilizer and insecticide depots, rice mills, a small bazaar, and a few other public buildings. In most respects, however, it differs little from neighbouring villages. Most of the working population is engaged in agriculture in the surrounding fields. Nevertheless, Gurajāla is on the paved road from Guntur, the district headquarters, to Nāgārjunasāgar and Hyderabad, the state capital. It is also a shopping centre and meeting-place for the near-by villages. It is a place to which local agriculturists come to see a film, to kill time, to engage in politics, or to pick up supplies. It is also a place from which they set out for more distant places of business or pilgrimage.

About 15 miles south-west of Gurajāla is Mācerla, the largest town in Palnāḍu. A sub-*tāluk* headquarters, with a population of about 21,000,[7] Mācerla was something of a boom town during the construction of the Nāgārjunasāgar Dam (about 13 miles to the west) and its network of canals. A cement factory which was built to supply cement for the dam now dominates the Mācerla skyline. It derives its raw materials from a large limestone quarry at the edge of town. Stretching along the side of the road are hastily constructed shops and eating places which were built during the boom years. But if one penetrates into the heart of town, an older, more durable, and slower-paced town is to be found. The new town has its factory, lorry repair shops, railway terminus, slate stockpile, radio shops, and its busy, dusty road. In contrast to the cement factory of the new town, the older part of town, with its quiet streets and bullocks going to and from the fields, is dominated by a large Vīrabhadra temple, a Śiva temple, and a fine twelfth-century Viṣṇu temple. These temples and the great wooden chariot of Lakṣmi-Cennakēśava (Viṣṇu and his consort) sit near the

banks of the Candravanka, a small river. From this part of town, paths lead to the fields through the ruins of old temples and rude shrines. There is little except the great temple with its solid wall and high gates to distinguish this part of town from the surrounding villages.

The two towns, Mācerla and Gurajāla, have been political centres in Palnāḍu since at least the twelfth century and probably much longer. The names of both are well known throughout the Telugu country. They are known as the capitals of the rival factions of the Heroes of *Palnāṭivīracaritra*. The temples of Mācerla and Gurajāla are said to have been built by the Heroes; so, too, the tanks, old fort walls, many ruins, and the towns themselves. These are, and have been, the most important towns in Palnāḍu.[8] Palnāḍu itself is a land of about 1,041 square miles and contains about 100 villages.

About 10 miles south of Gurajāla is the village called Kārempūḍi. Near it is the famed battlefield of Palnāḍu. Kārempūḍi lies on the banks of the Nāgulēru, a small river which rises in the rocky hills to the south and flows northwards across Palnāḍu into the Kṛiṣṇā River. On the west bank of the Nāgulēru is the inhabited portion of Kārempūḍī. It is a small town or, rather, a large village of *c.* 5,000 persons. The most impressive structures in the town are two temples, one of Cennakēśava (Viṣṇu) and the other of the Goddess Ankamma. Both are old and well built. In the plastered-stone-and-mud compound wall of the Ankamma temple is a small hole positioned so as to afford the Goddess an unobstructed view of a flat plain to the east, across the Nāgulēru. The plain is the Kārempūḍi Battleground. Ankamma is said to have been a witness to what transpired on that battleground and to watch over it today. At the edge of the plain, on the bank of a pool in the river, is another temple. Many villages and towns in Palnāḍu claim some connection with the Heroes and their activities, but here in Kārempūḍi is the temple where the epic Heroes are worshipped. Here is the opportunity to appreciate the *Epic of Palnāḍu* in its home setting. Mācerla and Gurajāla were the capitals of the Heroes; other villages witnessed their activities;[9] but Kārempūḍi is where they came to die as Heroes. It is where the resolution of the tensions took place.

Notes

1 This well-known description of Palnāḍu is credited to Śrīnāthuḍu and is found in many published works. For this and a large selection of other stray verses that are said to have been composed by Śrīnāthuḍu, see Śrīnāthuḍu, 'Vīdhi Nāṭakamu, Cāṭuvulu', in Vinukoṇḍa Vallabharāya, *Kṛīḍabhirāmamu* (Mācilipaṭnam: M. Seshachalam and Co., 1972), p. 96. The following is the verse in Telugu:

cinna cinna rāḷḷu, cillara dēvaḷḷu
nāgulēṭi nīḷḷu, nāparāḷḷu
sajja jonna kūḷḷu, sarpambulunu dēḷḷu
pallenāṭi sīma palletūḷḷu.

2 The Vīrabhadra temple in Mācerla has pillars famous for their capacity to reflect an image like a mirror. The temple was probably built during the Kākatīya period, thirteenth century. Many small temples, like the houses, are simply slate scraps from the quarries that are piled up with a minimal use of mortar.

3 Vallabharāya, *Kṛīḍabhirāmamu*, p. 93:

rasikuḍu pōvaḍu palnā
ḍesagangā rambhayaina nēkule vaḍukun
vasudhēśudaina dunnunu
gusumāstruṇḍaina jonna kūḍē kuḍucun.

4 At the height of the construction period, nearly 40,000 unskilled labourers a day are said to have worked on the dam. (Information supplied at the visitors' information centre at Nāgārjunasāgar Dam.)

5 Between the dam and the inhabited farmlands of Palnāḍu is a stretch of about 10 miles of very rough country. The majority of people in Palnāḍu have probably never seen the dam.

6 Census of 1971.

7 Census of 1971.

8 Another town of considerable recent importance as a trading centre and producer of lime is Pidugurāḷḷu near the eastern border of Palnāḍu. Its population in 1971 was 12,080.

9 At least a third of the villages have some well-established connection with the Heroes, and if the villages were individually surveyed, this number would probably be higher.

Chapter III

The Festival of the Heroes

At the south-east corner of Palnāḍu, about 8 miles east of Kārempūḍi, is Guttikonḍa Cave.[1] Among many other associations that it has in local minds, the cave is said to be the dwelling-place of Brahma Nāyuḍu, his son Bālacandruḍu, their wives, and other heroic members of the epic cast. After the battle of Kārempūḍi, Brahma Nāyuḍu raised all the Heroes from the dead and led them into the cave. There they have dwelt as a family up to the present day.[2] Brahma Nāyuḍu himself is believed to be engaged in austere self-discipline for most of the year. But once a year he interrupts his austerities, emerges from the cave, goes to Kārempūḍi, and enters the Īrlaguḍi (Temple of the Heroes). Brahma Nāyuḍu makes his passage on the night of the full moon in the month of Kārtika (October–November). The sounds he emits as he enters the temple signal the beginning of the Vīrōtsavamu (The Festival of the Heroes). On the same night Pōtarāju, a male guardian deity of the Telugu country, who resides in the temple compound in the form of a rectangular slab of limestone, is bound with a cotton net and adjured to stand guard over the temple.[3]

The following morning the *Pīṭhādhipati*, an Āruvēla Niyogi Brāhmaṇ[4] who is official head of the Hero Cult and who presides over the festival, has letters of invitation written and sent in the four cardinal directions. Two banners, the flags of Brahma Nāyuḍu and of Nāyakurālu, the woman who is his principal opponent in the epic, are hung in trees before the temple. Then four *Kannama Dāses*, Māla caste followers of the tradition who are so called after Kannama, the chief Māla Hero, are dispatched to carry the invitations to the surrounding countryside. Each *Kannama Dās* goes 2 miles in one of the four directions and gives the written invitation to the village lying in that direction. In each village the message is given to the Mālas. They in turn pass the invitation on to the next village. In this way the invitation is conveyed over long distances across Palnāḍu and throughout the surrounding country. In response to the invitation, people of all castes, all who belong to the tradition (*ācāramu*) prepare to travel to Kārempūḍi for the Festival of the Heroes.[5]

On the new moon of Kārtika, fifteen days after the invitations have been sent out, followers of the *ācāramu* arrive in Kārempūḍi by foot,

bicycle, bullock cart, or bus. Some people bring rams for sacrifice. From each village where the tradition thrives, deities (*daivālu*) are brought to the festival. The *daivālu* are the reliquary weapons of the Heroes (see Plate 1): tridents, broadswords, sabres, shields. They are the concrete form in which the deified Heroes are worshipped. All of them are of heroic proportions.[6] They come from many villages in Palnāḍu and perhaps from more distant places in Nellore (Nellūru), Krishna (Kriṣṇa), Ongole (Ongōlu), Guntur, and maybe other districts as well.[7] The *daivālu* are draped with cloths that have been offered to them. Their points are adorned with small, silver parasols, insignia of honour. The *daivālu* from distant places join the *daivālu* that are kept in the temples of Ankamma, Cennakēśava, and the Heroes. First, they are bathed, decorated, and paraded about the village. Then they are honoured with a *pūja*.

The major event on this, the first day of the festival, is called *rācagāvu*. *Rācagāvu* is the sacrifice of a ram to Pōtarāju. A Māla who is also one of the epic singers performs the sacrifice by biting the jugular vein of a young ram and then pulling off its skin with his teeth. A young bull buffalo is also sacrificed at the same time. The blood of the ram and buffalo are mixed with boiled grain and thrown into the air with shouts of 'Poli! Poli! Puloi!' (This is the usual way of making a sacrifice to a village deity.) Some of the sacrificial offering is also thrown into the air in honour of the Sixty-six Heroes.[8] Scheduled on the same night are stories from *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. They are known as 'Rācagāvu' (after the sacrifice) or 'The Conquest of Śivanandi Fort', after the main events of the episodes. These stories are set in Kalyāṇ, Karnataka, and are separately known as 'The Story of the Deaf-Mute Rāju' and 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi'. They give background and explanations for the sacrifices to Ankamma and Pōtarāju.

Each of the following four days also has its prescribed events. On the second day, 'Gurajāla Rāyabāramu', or 'The Mission to Gurajāla', is sung under the covered porch of the Temple of the Heroes. In this story a young Rāju from Kalyāṇ is slain through the machinations of Brahma Nāyuḍu and Nāyakurālu. The murder provides the immediate excuse for the preparations that lead to the final battle of the epic. On the third day, 'Manda Pōru', or 'The Attack on the Herd', is told at a designated spot on the battlefield. The significant events in this story are the death of Lankanna, a herdsman, under the feet of Bolli Āvu, a sacred white cow, and his resurrection by Brahma Nāyuḍu. The story is also known as 'The Death of Lankanna'. The scenes in this story, which is said to be endowed with great power, are also enacted by hereditarily designated persons of various castes.[9] It is noteworthy that

the order of days in which these two stories are sung is the reverse of their appearance in the order of events in the epic. This is illustrative of the lack of defined order for different stories of the epic cycle. This point is discussed at greater length in Chapter V. The ritual calendar of the festival determines what will be sung and when. The epic does not determine what will happen ritually.

The fourth day of the festival is perhaps the most popular on the calendar. It is the day of the great cock fight. At three o'clock in the afternoon the Heroes, represented by the *daivālu* (their weapons), are taken to the Nāgulēru River. There a *pūja* is performed to them. They are then returned to the Temple of the Heroes in a procession. Men of various castes play the roles of important characters in the epic: a Telaga man is Nāyakurālu, the Reḍḍi woman who is Brahma Nāyuḍu's chief opponent; a Cākala is Bālacandruḍu, the boy hero of Velama caste; an Erra Golla plays Gōpanna, the Hero of his own caste; the *Piṭhādhipati*, a Brāhmaṇ, is Brahma Nāyuḍu, the Velama incarnation of Viṣṇu; and a Māla is Kannama, the great Hero of his own caste.[10] All these take holy water (*tirtham*) and food that has been offered to the deity (*prasādam*) at the temples of Goddess Ankamma and Cennakēśava. Finally comes one of the highlights of the festival, the cock fights. These are staged on the battlefield near the Temple of the Heroes. When the cock fights are over, the *daivālu* are returned to the temple where the followers of the *ācāramu* engage in sword-play as a form of worship (*katti sēva*).[11]

Katti sēva leads to a kind of spirit possession. It is an important ritual of the Hero Cult. The sabre used is one that is wielded by an epic singer (*Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyavantuḍu*) during a performance. It is first offered a coconut. The milk of the coconut is sprinkled over it, and then it is passed through the smoke of a censer. The sword is then handed to one of the followers of the Hero Cult who proceeds to strike it repeatedly against his bare chest. The man usually appears to be totally transported by this activity. Some observers report that the 'possessed' man actually continues slashing himself until blood gushes from his chest,[12] but on the three occasions when I observed this ritual being performed, no one drew any blood. On the contrary, participants and others connected with the cult emphasized that the sword would not harm people of the *ācāramu*. But they did say that it would readily cut anyone else who tried to follow the example of the devotees.[13]

The possessed man continues to strike his chest with the sword until he perspires profusely and becomes, to all appearances, totally oblivious to his surroundings. After a time, the *Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyavantuḍu*, or some other appropriate person, gently lays his hands on the man

performing the *katti sēva*. He then becomes quiet. The process may be repeated by several persons in succession. The *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* also takes his turn. *Katti sēva* is most commonly performed by Mālas, but members of other castes also take their turns. Thurston (1909) described the same kind of ritual among the Gollas. He spoke of the person performing *Katti sēva* as having been possessed by the spirit of an ancestor. The same ancestor is recognizable as a character in another Telugu epic tradition, *Kāṭama Rāju Katha*.[14] Performance of *katti sēva* by men of the *ācāramu* is not restricted to this fourth day of the festival. It may take place at the discretion of the singers and the followers of the tradition. It is not, however, supposed to be done unless connected with a performance of a part of the epic. Furthermore, certain episodes absolutely require that the ritual be carried out before they are sung.

The fifth day of the festival, the fourth day of the waxing moon, is called *kalli pāḍu*, or 'the horror and the desolation'. In the evening on the banks of Nāgulēru, *pūja* to the heroes is followed by a procession through the streets of the village. The day takes its name from the desolation that followed the horror of the final battle of the epic, the battle that is said to have taken place on that same plain, the Kārempūḍi battlefield. After a procession that takes the heroes to the Brahmanāyuṇi Maṇṭapam, or 'Brahma Nāyuḍu's Tower', in Kārempūḍi, the people of the *ācāramu* return to the Temple of the Heroes. There, on the ancient battlefield, they fall on their weapons, the *daivālu*, re-enacting the heroic death of the Heroes of Palnāḍu.

The day that follows is a free one on the festival calendar. On the seventh day a dinner is arranged for the temple functionaries and others who have participated in the various rituals. All sit down together without regard to caste.[15]

Since the late sixties, the Government—apparently through the order of the District Collector—has used its police power to enforce certain restrictions and changes in the way the festival takes place. According to both the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* with whom I discussed the festival,[16] the Government has put a stop to the sacrifice of rams and buffalo. They have also ordered the traditional cock fight to be given up. The reason for these restrictions is perhaps concern over the fights which frequently broke out at the festival. Thousands of people came for the celebration, and the cock fight was a particular cause of trouble. It was not uncommon for people to get killed. A killing which took place in 1967 may have been the immediate excuse for these restrictions.

There are some indications, however, that the prevention of

violence might not be the only reason for the restrictions on the festival. According to Gāleyya, a *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu*, devotees of the Heroes were told that they must stop the animal sacrifices, but that they would be allowed to continue offering fowl. They were also told that they could only continue to have the festival if a Brāhman performed the rituals. Many of the regular festival officiates are Mālas, Gollas, and other low-caste individuals. This would suggest the possibility of conflict between the low-caste people who make up the bulk of the adherents to the cult and people of higher castes who are politically and socially dominant. Gāleyya claims to have been incarcerated and forced to give up singing the epic. His stories were also declared 'worthless' by local government officials. He blames his problems on the police and the Congress Party. The result of these pressures and restrictions has been a reduction in the number of people who now attend the festival. Some are said to feel that if no animal sacrifices or cock fights are to be held they might as well perform their *pūja* to Ankamma in their own villages. There is a general impression among the faithful cult followers that the area has suffered from the lack of attention to Ankamma and the others. Some people predict that Ankamma will take her toll. The story of 'The Birth of Ankamma' records what happened when a previous government denied the Goddess her due.

Though the Festival of the Heroes in Kārempūḍi has suffered in recent years, it is not the only festival in which the Heroes are honoured and the epic sung. The Gurajāla festival has also had the same restrictions placed upon it. But the festival in Tuḷḷūru in Mangalagiri *Tāluk*, Guntur District, is thriving, and all its traditional sacrifices, entertainments, and rituals are being performed. The temple in Tuḷḷūru has substantial patronage, organization, and endowment lands to support it. A prominent Kamma agriculturist and owner of an agrochemical business is the head of the organization. Tuḷḷūru, though closer to district headquarters and in a more thickly populated area than Kārempūḍi, does not draw such large crowds. Moreover it is further from main roads and thus less easily observed and policed. Many smaller cult temples are located in villages in Guntur District and in surrounding districts. There is even one in municipal Guntur. But none of these, apart from the three mentioned, has a festival of any significance at this time.[17]

NOTES

1 It is in what was Akkirāju Umākāntam's village.
2 Conversations with Āliśeṭṭi Gāleyya, October 1974.
3 Subbārāvu, 'Vīragathakavitvamu', pp. 647–8.
4 *Piṭhādhipati*: a common title for the head of a religious institution. *Āruvēla Niyogi*: a Brāhman of the secular division as distinct from the *Vaidiki* who are the priestly Brāhmans. The *Niyogis* in Palnāḍu are most often known as village record keepers.
5 Subbārāvu, 'Viragathakavitvamu', p. 648.
6 Gāleyya, October 1974.
7 Conversations with Mēḍukoṇḍūru Cennayya, September 1974.
8 Gāleyya, 1974. Cf. Story 1, note 5 for the 'Sixty-six Heroes'.
9 Gāleyya and Cennayya, 1974.
10 Gāleyya, 1974.
11 Also called *sēvaceyyaṭam*.
12 Subbārāvu, 'Viragathakavitvamu', p. 644.
13 Conversations with Mādala Narasimhā Rāvu, the Kamma *Ācāryavaru-alu* (head of the cult in Tuḷḷuru), September 1974.
14 Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras: Government Press, 1909), vol. II, pp. 294–5. The Brahmayya mentioned by Thurston is probably Brahma Nāyudu.
15 Gāleyya (1974), and Republic of India, *Census of India, 1961*, Vol. II: *AndhraPradesh, Part VII-B(6), Fairs and Festivals (6. Guntur District)* (Hyderabad: Government of A. P., 1967), p. 189.
16 Gāleyya and Cennayya, 1974.
17 Cennayya, 1974.

Chapter IV

The *Vīra Vidyavantulu*: Telugu Oral Narrative Singers

At the Festival of the Heroes in Kārempūḍi and at other Hero festivals, a prominent role is played by the *Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyavantulu*. These are the men who are learned in the heroic tradition of Palnāḍu. They sing stories from the epic cycle at regularly scheduled times on the festival calendar. The *Vīra Vidyavantulu* claim the sole authority to sing *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha* at festivals and at private gatherings such as weddings and death commemoration days. Their authority is delegated through the *Pīṭhādhipati* in Kārempūḍi. He is said to have the right to press a civil suit against any individual who encroaches upon the exclusive rights of the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*.[1] In reality, however, others do sing stories from the tradition, but these apparently sing a shorter version and do not sing at the festival in Kārempūḍi or at any other festival.[2] Though the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*'s authority to sing is said to come through the *Pīṭhādhipati* in Kārempūḍi, they themselves suggest that the Brāhmaṇ's role as head of the temple organization and of the cult is one which they have granted to him for practical purposes. He, like the Kamma *Ācāryavantulu* in Tuḷḷūru, seems to be a front man. His function is to lend weight and respectability to the cult. The *real* knowledge of the tradition and its associated rituals is retained by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* themselves.[3]

Yearly, at the time of the Festival of the Heroes, the *Vidyavantulu* leave their villages and gather in Kārempūḍi at the Temple of the Heroes. For the duration of the festival, they are allotted cells built into the south wall of the temple compound. There they camp and do their cooking. Certain *Vidyavantulu* are assigned specific, ritually important stories to sing. Each of them also has his own hereditary role in the processions which mark the days of the festival. But the stories that are sung at specified times and places constitute only a fraction of the *Epic of Palnāḍu*. Many of the popular and best-known episodes are not on the calendar; they are sung only on request. These stories are some of the greatest attractions of the festival. They are also the stories most often sung at other times and places. The singing may occur at the Ankamma temple, at the Cennakēśava temple, or at the Temple of the Heroes. But there is some hesitation on the part of the

Vidyavantulu to perform a ritually prescribed song when it is not accompanied by its appropriate ritual, e.g. *katti sēva*, Ankamma *pūja*, animal sacrifice to Pōtarāju, and others.[4]

Tradition specifies how a *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* should be accoutred for a performance of the epic. In his right hand he wields an *aṇḍe katti* (a sabre with bells on the hilt); in his left hand is a *dālu* (a small, round, brass shield). On his right leg is a jangling anklet. Wound round his head is a twelve-cubit-long turban with an ornament bearing a crescent moon and an *ummahupitta*.[5] Around his neck there must be a garland. His forehead and the right side of his chest are marked with a *tirumaṇi* (the upright red-and-white mark of Viṣṇu). The left side of his chest is draped with a red-and-white sash. It is seven cubits long, decorated with bells and beads, and hangs down to his thigh. His white cotton lower garment is tied with a distinctive tie and knot. All these items are required by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* tradition; no singer would venture to perform without them. The singers themselves claim that no one but a *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* would dare to invest himself with this particular combination of clothing, ornaments, and weapons. (See Plates 2 and 3.)

Tradition also determines how the lead singer should be accompanied. This too is supported by the authority of the *Pīṭhādhipati* in Kārempūḍi. On the *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu*'s right is a man with a pair of double-ended brass drums. These he beats on one end with a short stick and on the other end with his fingers. The drums are called a '*pambajōḍu*', or 'pair of *pambas*'. On the *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu*'s left is a man who plays the bellows (*titti*). These are a goatskin with the two hind legs sewed shut, a double reed in one front leg, and a bamboo blowpipe in the other front leg. The *titti* operates on the same principle as a bagpipe, producing one continuous note as a drone. The third back-up man plays a finger cymbals (*tāḷamu*) and joins the drummer in making oral responses at appropriate times in the performance by the *Vidyavantuḍu*. The accompanists—called '*Vantulu*'[6]—wear no special dress for the performance. None of the other instruments commonly used in the Telugu country by oral narrative singers are ever used by the *Vidyavantulu*.

The *Vīra Vidyavantulu* are not limited to one caste. At the present time there are singers from the Māla, Telaga, and Kansāli or goldsmith castes.[7] The majority, however, are Mālas. There is only one household each of Telagas and Kansālis and the role itself is generally regarded as being a Māla prerogative. Perhaps half a dozen active Māla households hold this hereditary distinction. The Telega and Kansāli singers do not perform all the sacrificial duties. Furthermore,

their fellow caste members regard their occupation as somewhat questionable and demeaning through its association with Mālas. The Telaga family does claim, however, to marry on an equal basis with other Telaga families who follow other lines of work.[8] It is not clear why these Telaga and Kansāli families follow a profession that is associated with Mālas and which is similar to other traditions associated with Mādigas, the other great untouchable caste. None of the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* offer any explanation for their families being singers. They only say that their families have done this since the time of their forefathers. They apparently all have, or have had in the past, temple lands allotted to them as payment for their services.

From a Telugu written literary perspective, it is extraordinary that the keepers of Palnāḍu tradition are primarily Mālas and exclusively non-Brāhmaṇ. Written Telugu literature has been dominated by Brāhmaṇs who are often versed in both Sanskrit and Telugu, but in the realm of oral literature, which is based upon events and traditions indigenous to the Telugu country itself, it is the Mālas, Mādigas, and Jangams who just as thoroughly dominate the literary field. All the other styles of oral narrative literature which were recorded are sung by professional singers from one or the other division of these three castes.

The repertoires of these non-Brāhmaṇ singers include stories that are found also in Sanskrit tradition, but it has been suggested that the versions which they sing of stories found in Sanskrit epics and *purāṇas* are part of a pan-Indian oral tradition and not from a tradition which depended upon the medium of Sanskrit.[9] Stories from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, a popular subject for oral singers, include episodes not found in Sanskrit or the classical Telugu versions. Some—such as the popular *Mai Rāvaṇa Caritra* that is known throughout South India—though associated with the *Rāmāyaṇa*, do not have even the slightest roots in written sources.

In the repertoires of the oral singers, traditions generated by local events are considered respectable and inspire devotion to an extent which Brāhmaṇ tradition would never condone. Unlettered persons sometimes call such local stories '*jaragina kathalu*', or 'stories that happened', as distinct from the stories of the Sanskrit tradition. One cannot, however, necessarily see any definite value-judgements being placed on the two types by audiences or singers.

The *Epic of Palnāḍu* is highly local: both its content and its audience are local. Thus, the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* are more purely local in outlook than the singers whose repertoires are mixed. For other differences and similarities between the singers of *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, it would

be useful to compare both the singers and their stories to another tradition which is perhaps more representative of Telugu oral singers.

Singers in the Telugu oral narrative traditions are most often, but not exclusively, illiterate or semi-literate. They are usually Śaivites or untouchable Vaiṣṇavites. They are also semi-itinerant. Their repertoires consist of separate stories with no particular thematic connection or central theme. These are derived from a wide range of sources: pan-Indian epics, *purāṇas*, fairy-tales, pilgrimage tales (comparable to the *Canterbury Tales*), local events, regional historical events. The same stories may be sung by many different types of singers.

An example of singers of this type is a group called '*Dāsarulu*'. A full repertoire of this type was recorded in Viśākhapatnam District.[10] These particular Dāsarulu—the name comes from their devotion to Viṣṇu—are also Mālas, but they prefer to be called Dāsarulu or Harijans. They are devotees of Varahā Narasimha, the presiding deity of Simhācalam temple. During the agricultural season the Dāsarulu, who comprise about half the residents of Kusulavāḍa village, are engaged in the fields, but during the off-season their men and older boys travel about as itinerant musicians. Their women and children remain in Kusulavāḍa.

Dāsarulu go about in pairs from house to house and from village to village. One man plays a *tambura* (lute) and the other a *gummeṭa* (small, hourglass-shaped drum). As they approach a house, they begin to sing and stand outside the door in hopes of getting some grain or cash. If invited, they return in the evening to perform for as many nights as someone is willing to pay. They are best known as singers of *Bobbili Yuddha Katha*,[11] a story based on events which took place in the eighteenth century during the French presence in Hyderabad and coastal Andhra. But they also sing stories from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*; a story about a clash between two landlords in their own village in 1956; and other stories from diverse times and places. Their style is a lively, rapidly sung mixture of prose and verse lines. They are entertainers, and they are willing to sing for almost anyone who can afford to pay them. All the singers of Kusalavāḍa have a repertoire in common, but their stories have no connecting link or apparent association with any specific religious cult.

These Dāsarulu of Kusalavāḍa[12] are typical of the semi-itinerant singers of the Telugu country. Others, such as the *Jamikili* of Śrīkākulam District and the Dāsarulu of Guṇṭūr District, follow a similar life-style and style of singing. The instruments may be variants or wholly different. For example, the Jamikilis use an open-ended drum with a string attached to the underside of the head. This drum, called

'*jamikili*', gives its name to the group. The Jamikili women also sing with their husbands. The basic style of singing and many songs are common to many groups. The *Piccagunṭlu*, who occasionally know some of the stories of Palnāḍu, follow a similar pattern.[13] A well-known singer may wait at home for requests to appear; he may also demand fifty or more rupees per night. The *Jangam* singers recorded in Palnāḍu were of this quality and capable of singing seventy nights of songs. Although Jangams are technically non-Brāhmaṇ Śaivite minstrel-priests, they are fundamentally secular entertainers.

Like the other oral singers, the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* are non-Brāhmaṇ and primarily Mālas. But their songs differ in style, in content, and in the occasions when and where they are performed. The most significant difference between them and the others which have been mentioned, however, lies in the close association between these *Vīra Vidyavantulu* and the heroic *ācāramu*, particularly the temple in Kārempūḍi. The *Vidyavantulu* hold, or have held, *mānyams*. These are lands belonging to a temple and held free of rent or taxes as payment for services to a temple. Gāleyya, the Telaga whose family plays the role of Nāyakurālu at Kārempūḍi, has a *mānyam* from the temple of Goddess Paṭhapaṭamma in Gurajāla. For the continued use of the land he must sing the ritually required sections of the epic at the yearly festival in Gurajāla. Gāleyya's family also once possessed eight acres from the temple committee in Kārempūḍi for their hereditary role as Nāyakurālu.[14]

Cennayya, who lives in Lām, Guṇṭūr Tāluk, is a Māla caste *Vidyavantulu*. He is charged with dual responsibilities. He is the chief singer at Tullūru and is paid. His family also once had a *mānyam* at Kārempūḍi, but this was lost a generation or two ago because of debts. Even so, he still performs and plays his part in the *rācagāvu*, the ritual sacrifice of a ram.[15]

It is likely that the other *Vidyavantulu* also hold or have once held *mānyams* in these or other temples.[16] Both Gāleyya and Cennayya, however, were reluctant to pass on definite information about their fellow singers. This was apparently due to caste and personal rivalries as well as to fear of losing my patronage.

Association with a particular temple does not limit the singer to performing only at that temple. He may perform at private affairs, when invited by followers of the *ācāramu*. In such cases he is remunerated. But the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* do not live semi-itinerant lives as do most of the other Telugu singers.[17] Furthermore, *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is sung as a sacred performance and not as pure entertainment. This does not mean, however, that the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* are unique

among the oral singers in Andhra Pradesh: the Bainītivāru (Mādigas), or at least that division of them who sing *Kāṭama Rāju Katha*, seem to have held and observed a similar kind of discipline.[18] There are, no doubt, many others of similar traditions which have yet to be recorded or mentioned in scholarly studies.

It is the organization and fixed content of the material used by *Vīra Vidyavantulu* that distinguish them. Other entertainers can and do add new material to their repertoires. All the stories sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, whatever their ultimate origin, are directly related to the Heroes and their affairs: to land, Gods, exploits, births, deaths. Though one *Vidyavantuḍu* may develop one story or another more fully, whatever he sings is involved with the Heroes and is accepted by the other *Vidyavantulu* as an integral part of the tradition. One singer may criticize another's delivery but he does not ordinarily claim to know stories that the others do not. Not all the stories originate in the Palnāḍu area. The popular Śaivite story about Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu is included even though it is found in many other written and oral sources. Nevertheless, it becomes a part of the larger story of Bālacandruḍu. That story itself is incorporated securely into the whole tradition. 'The Birth of Ankamma' is also found in other contexts, but since she is one of the Heroes' principal deities, the story becomes a part of the overall development of the Palnāḍu story. The majority of the other stories are, however, in their present form, unique to *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. The unified theme of the stories is coupled with a unified time. The stories are all reasonably well adapted to the epic's time boundaries.

In short, the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, unlike the Dāsarulu and many others, are not secular entertainers who are loosely associated with a religious guru. They have 'in their guts' the sacred and historically unified tradition of a local religious and secular world-view. The epic that they sing is a systematic and selective collection of stories. All told, the songs fill thirty nights of performance on a theme. But nowhere are they all sung at one time or in a chronological order.

A *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* bears the major responsibility for a performance of a story from *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, but his style derives its distinctive characteristics from the interaction of the lead singer with the *Vantulu*. In addition to his voice, the *Vidyavantuḍu* has other 'tools' that are prescribed by the tradition. These include the anklet, sword, shield, etc. The *Vantulu* have drums, drone, cymbals, and their voices. We shall look next at the style and structure of the epic that emerges from this combination.

Notes

1 Gāleyya, 1974.

2 The other singers are the *Piccagunṭlu*. I have conflicting stories about these singers. Both Gāleyya and Cennayya assured me that the *Piccagunṭlu* do not know the story well and are not allowed to sing it at Kārempūḍi. Several writers, including Lakṣmikāntam and Reṇṭāla Gōpalākriṣṇa, *Palnāṭivīracaritra* (Vijayavāḍa: Jāyanti Publications, 1971), p. 6, claim that they do sing the epic. Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu, 'Vīra Vidyavantulu (lēka) Palnāṭivāru', *Andhra Jyōti*, 1 Jan. 1971, p. 16, claims that the *Piccagunṭlu* have no connection with the tradition whatsoever. I tried without success to track down some *Piccagunṭlu* to record what they had to sing; they had always 'just left' for another village. When I finally went to one of their home villages, near Mārkāpūr in Ongole (Ongōlu) District, I had just as poor luck. A young man said he could sing *Palnāṭivīracaritra*. But he said that his father who could sing it really well was in Telengāṇa. I convinced him that I would like to hear it anyway. He got out his harmonium and had sung about three lines when someone stopped him, saying that singing into a tape recorder would ruin his voice. Since it was a very remote village, it is possible that this was a legitimate fear. However, I am not sure that the fact that I told them I had recorded it from Gāleyya and Cennayya did not have a negative effect. The *Piccagunṭlu* are said to sing primarily for Reḍḍis, and Rāmarāju, *Jānapadagēya Sāhityamu*, p. 764, says that they are Śaivites. For this reason, it would be very interesting to get a recording of their version of the story. The Mālas, who are Vaiṣṇavites, as are the Velamas about whom they sing, might have a different story from the Śaivite *Piccagunṭlu* who sing chiefly for Reḍḍis. It was unfortunate that time did not allow me to track down a *Piccagunṭuḍu* who was willing to sing.

3 Conversations with Cennayya, 1971. Also, when I interviewed Pidugu Vēnkaṭa Ānjanēya Śiva Prasāḍu, the present *Pīṭhādhipati*, he seemed singularly uninformed about the tradition. He, however, had just graduated from college and returned to the village and had not had much to do with the temple organization or cult at the time I spoke to him in July 1974. As he did not have another job, he indicated that he might in the future take more interest in his position. His grandfather (mother's father) had died about a year earlier and the title had been given to him since his grandfather, Pidugu Naraśimham Ayyavāru, had no male offspring. Naraśimham was said to have been much better informed. Subbārāvu got considerable information from him. The *Ācāryavantulu* in Tuḷḷūru, Mādala Narasimhā Rāvu, took his position seriously but was not taken too seriously by Cennayya in his absence.

4 In 1974, Gāleyya told me a story about a time when he was persuaded to sing 'The Death of Lankanna' against his better judgement. He warned the people that it would not be wise to sing the story without the appropriate ritual, but when they insisted, he began. About half-way through the story, a thatch-roofed house caught fire and Gāleyya fled the scene.

5 *ummahupitta*: I am not sure what this is. Either Gāleyya and Cennayya were not wearing it or I did not notice it. Subbārāvu, *Prabha*, 29 Jan. 1971, p. 16, and others, list it among the required ornaments.

6 *Vantulu*: The term perhaps derives from the Telugu term 'vantapāṭa', meaning a song which includes a refrain or repeated verse. The '-vantulu' in *Vīra Vidyavantulu* derives from the suffix 'vantuḍu' (pl. 'vantulu') which

means 'one who has'. It is a Telugu form of a Sanskrit suffix. Thus 'Vidyavantulu' are 'those who possess the knowledge of'.

7 Gāleyya and Cennayya, 1974.

8 Gāleyya, 1974.

9 Velcheru Narayana Rao, 'Folk Rāmāyaṇas in Telugu', presented at Rāmāyaṇa Conference, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

10 Recorded by author between April and October 1974 in Viśākhapaṭnam.

11 Mallesam, *Bobbili Yuddha Katha* ed. M. Somasekhara Sarma. (Madras: Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, 1956.)

12 Kusalavāḍa is near Viśākhapaṭnam.

13 See note 2.

14 Gāleyya, 1974.

15 Cennayya, 1974.

16 I have not yet had an opportunity to interview any of the other *Vidyavantulu*.

17 Cennayya works as a farm labourer in Lām when he is not singing. He was in his mid-forties in 1974. Gāleyya had travelled about a good deal, but primarily as a local type of physician who specialized in the casting-out of evil spirits of one kind or another. I saw him do this at Nāgārjunasāgar to a boy who was in a run-down condition. His treatment included, among other things, a *pūja* to Ankālamma. In 1974 Gāleyya was in his early to mid-sixties and sang in neighbouring villages. Cennayya has no sons. Gāleyya's sons work on farms and in the lime works at Pidugurāḷḷu. The oldest of them is said to know how to sing very well, but he will not do so as long as his father is alive.

18 Cennayya, 1974.

Chapter V

Style of Singing and Structure of the Epic

As sung by *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, and accompanied by *Vantulu*, *Palnāṭi Vīrulu Katha* is a combination of heightened prose and non-metrical but rhythmic verse. The style also includes occasional melodious pieces accompanied by drum variations. Within this basic framework, the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* have great scope for exercising their creativity on emotional effects, descriptions, dialogue, arrangements, and other embellishments. The power of Palnāḍu epic style is only to be appreciated by the eye and ear in an actual performance. The talent of the individual singer and his capacity for creativity within the limitations of the style determine the impact of his performance on the audience. Nevertheless, it will be well to give the reader some idea of the style in which the epic is sung and how the individual singer structures a performance. The discussion that follows begins with a transcription and graphic representation of an episode from 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla'. It also includes transcriptions with musical notation of some brief passages from the same episode to illustrate the musical characteristics of the epic. These provide background information for an appreciation of the structure of the epic as a whole.

In Transcription A each set of four lines (a, b, c, d) represents four simultaneously occurring events. Line 'a' represents the part narrated/sung by the principal singer. Line 'b' represents the sound of the drums. Line 'c' is the vocal contribution of the drummer and the cymbals player. They are occasionally joined by the lead singer himself. Line 'd', the uninterrupted straight line, represents the drone note which continues throughout the performance. On paper the drone line serves to separate a series from the one that succeeds it. This indicates the simultaneity of itself and the preceding three lines. Though spacing within the lines is approximate, it is hoped that it will give some indication of the relative length of time occupied by each of the elements. (This can be seem more precisely in the examples with musical notation.) Representation of the sound of the cymbals has been omitted. Cymbals may accompany either vocal or drum sections. When recording it was usually necessary to eliminate the cymbals because of the difficulty they caused in recording the voices of the singers. The numbers which appear in parentheses at the beginning of

each prose section have been added as convenient reference points for the discussion which follows.

Transcription A[1]

(1) (a) a oka nāṭi-samayamlō ayokka pērinēḍu teppalayya
(b) X X
(c) aha aha
(d)

ā irusu iravai nāluguvēla gosangibaṇṭla-sainyālu tisukuni mu
X X
aha aha

nugoṭilanka prayāṇam-phiryāduku (rāmānēḍu)[2] veḷḷi yunnāru
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
veḷḷ ⎓

(2) ā munugōṭilanka yandu
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX X
yunnārōōōōō cennayyāāāāāāāāāā aha

anumula pāpireḍḍi anē kāpu samsāri oka pālāpu jonna
X
aha

vēsukoni ā jonna paṇḍi kaivali uṇṭunnadi akkaḍa oka mance
X X
aha aha

vēsukoni ā pāpireddigāru (rāmānēḍu) uṇḍiyunnāḍu
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
uṇḍa⎓⎓⎓⎓⎓⎓⎓⎓⎓ yunn

(3) ī yokka teppalayya pērinēḍu ī
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX . . .
āḍōōōōōōōōō kēśavāāāāāāāāā

sainyam yavanmandi kūḍā ā phiryādu āḍukunnāru manubōtlu
X X
aha aha

---

duppulu mārumusulēḷḷu goppa giripandulu koṇḍagorrelu
X X X
aha aha aha

---

sikhamuki ullanki dābagā kakkera kārukōḍi
X X X X
aha aha aha aha

---

nīrukōḍi idi yokka mriga-jantulu samharincukoni
X X X
aha aha aha

---

nāgāram-baṇḍi mīda vēsukoni (anēka vidhangā) vāru (rāmānēḍu)
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha

---

(4) ī
vastayunnāru . . .
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
vastayunnārōōōōōōōō rāmāyyāāāāāāāāā

---

anumula pāpireḍḍi anē kāpa samsāri unna tāvu vaṇṭi akkada
X
aha

---

oka vāṭa vrikṣamu undagā ā vāṭa vrikṣamu kinda vīru
X X
aha aha

---

yavanmandi (rāmānēḍu) uṇḍiyunnāru
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
uṇḍiyāāāāāā unnārōōōōōōōō

---

(5) ā reḍḍigāru uṇṭunnāru ararerarera
XXXXXXXXXXX . . .
cennayyāāāāāāāāā
X
aha

---

rerarerarē ekkado goppa vādādagaligina rāju vaccināru
X
aha
X
aha

---

manam mance mīda kūrcōḍam dharmamkâdu ani
vaccināru
X
aha

---

kindiki digi anni kankulu vircukoni ūsabiyyam paṭṭukoni
X
aha
X
aha

ā reḍḍigāru ī rājugāriki (anēka vidhamuga) najara
X
aha
X
aha
X
aha
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

(rāmānēḍu) tecciyunnāḍu
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
tecciyāāāāāā unnāḍōōōōōōōōōō cennayy

(yah) (6) ī teppalayya anucunnāḍu ararerer
XXXXXXXX . . .
āāāāāāāāāāāā
X
aha

---

erē yi tellaga-dhāvaḷyangā uṇṭunnavi avi pacci mutyamulu
X
aha
X
aha

---

ivi pacci mutyamulu kābōlu ivi rāṇivāsamulō āḍavarikiganaka
X
aha
X
aha

---

iccinaṭlayitē vāru dharincukoni bangārapu sūdulatōṭi
X X
aha aha aha

---

randhramulu vēsukoni paṭṭu dhāramutōṭi guccukoni arta
X X
aha aha

---

vēsukoṇṭāru ani ceppi ēḍantastulamēḍalōki tīsukoni (rāmānēḍu)
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha

---

vastayunnāru
XXXXXXXX . . . .
vastayāāāāāā unnārōōōōōō ō kēśavāāāāāāāāāāā

---

(7) vāru evarevari bhāryalaki vāru istuyunnāru ī jonnalu vārini
X
aha

---

cūsinaṭuvaṇṭi vāralayi araṛarē entayo dhāvaḷyangā uṇṭuyunnavi
X
aha

---

ivi pacci mutyamulu ani ceppi paṭṭu dhāramulu tīsuku
X X
aha aha

---

vacci bangārapu sudulatōṭi randhramulu vēsukoni
X X
aha he aha

---

vāri arta vēsukonnāru kūrcukoni ohō nāyanā kumārā
X X X
aha aha aha

ōri teppalayyā ivi pacci mutyamulu tecciyunnāvu
X
aha
teppalayya

---

ivi āku ē vidhamugā uṇṭū yunnadō ī ceṭṭu ē vidhamugā
X X
aha aha

---

uṇṭunnadō nēḍu oka ceṭṭu tīsukoni vacci nāku ivvamani
X X XXXXXXX
aha aha

---

vāru (rāmānēḍu) antuyunnāru
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
antayāāāāāāā unnārōōōōōōōōō o cen

---

(8) ōhō ammā vīravidyaladēvi nēnu adē
XXXXXXXXXX . . X
nayyāāāāāāāāāā aha

---

prakāramgā testu unnānani ceppi vāru vēṭa sannāham vacci yunnāru
X
aha

---

yadhā prakāram vētāḍukoni ā vāṭa vrikṣamkindaki
X X
aha aha

---

vacyunnāru cūcenu reḍḍigāru (rāmānēḍu) cōdyambugānu
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha cōdy

---

(9) īśvarà par
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX . . .
ambōōōōōōōō gānūūūūūūū ceñnayyāāāāāāāāāāā

---

amēśvarā jagadhiśvara ara harā ōho nāyanā mon
X
aha o nāyanā aha

---

na vaccitē maryāda cesiyunnānu ivēla malli vacciyunnāru dinam
X X
aha aha

---

mancidani dinānā dongalu vaccēṭṭugā unnadani ceppi ā vēḷa
X
aha

---

reḍḍigāru mance (rāmā) diganē lēdu
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha ōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōō rām

---

(10) i rājugāru cūstuyunnāru ōhō nāy
. . . X
āāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāā aha

---

anā oyi arkāri nīvu veḷḷi ā reḍḍigāridaggiriki
X X X
aha ēmannāru aha aha

---

veḷḷi oka ceṭṭu paṭṭuku rammannāru arkāri vacci ō nā
X X X
aha aha aha

---

yanā reḍḍigāru mā rājugāru oka ceṭṭu tīsukurammanamannāru
X X
aha aha

---

nēnu ivvanu veḷḷamannāru rāju gāru ceppināru ā ceṭṭu kharīdu
X
aha aha

---

enta avutundō nēnistānu ani maḷḷi rājugāru (anēka vidhanga
X XXXXXXX
aha

---

rāmānēdu) pamputunnāru
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
pampāāāāāāāāāāāāāāā yunnārōōōōōōōō

---

(11) ōhō nāyanā reḍḍigāru mā rājug
XXXXXXXXXXXXX . . . X
ōōōōō rāmāāāāāāāāāāā aha

āru oka ceṭṭu paṭṭuku rammannāḍu dāni kharīdu-yiluva
X X
aha aha

---

istānannāru ceṭṭu kādu gadā ceṭṭu kinda maṭṭi kūḍā
X
aha

---

ivvanannāḍu veḷḷu veḷḷamani (anēka vidhanga) reḍḍigāru
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha

(rāmānēḍu) aṇṭuyunnāru
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aṇṭāāāāāāāāāāā yunnārōōōōōōōōōōō o

---

(12) idi rājugāru viṇṭuyunnāru uṇḍi uṇḍi
XXXXXXXXXXXX . . . X
cennayyāāāāāāāāāāā aha

---

lēci iṇṭiki vaccē samayamlō ī irasu iravai nālugu vēla gōsangi baṇṭla-
X
aha

---

sainyānni āścaryamandagā cēni mīda (rāmā) kanusaiga cēstayun
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha aha

---

nāḍu (13)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX . . .
cēstāāāāāāāāāā yunnāḍōōōōōōōōōō o cennayyāāāāāāāāāā

ā rājugāru kanusaiga cēsēṭappaṭiki ī irasu iravi nālugu vēla
X
aha

---

gōsangi baṇṭla-sainyamū vanginaṭuvanṭi vārai manişiki oka
X X
aha

---

vāgaḷḷa lāgāru cēni yāvattu (anēka vidhanga) ayipōta (rāmā)
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha aha

---

ayipōtayunnādi
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
ayipōtāāāāāāāāāāāāāyunnadiiiiiiiii hē kēśavāāāāāāā

---

(14) appudā reḍḍigāru cūstūyunnāru okkaru
XX X
āāāāā aha ēmani

---

raṇā-yuddhamu ceyyalēru a mance mīda yuṇḍi ēmanṭunnāḍu
X X
aha aha

ōhō nāyanā ōyi rājugāru nā cēni nīvu
X X X
aha ēmantunnāḍu aha aha

---

aggam cēsi pīkincukoni veḷḷutunnāvu mā vūra bhīmarājugāri
X
aha

---

uttaravu unnaṭṭayitē nī astamulu maṇikaṭṭuvarakū nēnu
X X X
aha aha aha

---

narikincēvaṇṇi ani (anēka vidhangā) reḍḍigāru (rāmānēḍu) aṇṭu
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha

---

yunnāḍu
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aṇṭūūūūūūūūūūūū yunnāḍōōōōōōōōōōō cennayyāāāāāāā

---

(15) ī teppalayya ī māṭa vinnāru iṇṭiki vacci yunnāru
XXX X X
āāāāā . . . aha aha

āḍavāriki yokka ceṭṭu icciyunnāḍu ayyā rājugāru vūra bhīma
X X
aha aha

---

rājugāru ēlāṇṭi vāḍō enta balāḍyuḍō nēnu cūdavale ani ceppi
X X
aha aha

ā vūra bhīma rājugāri mīdaki (anēka vidhangā) yuddhāniki
X X
aha aha XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

---

rājugāru (rāmā) prayāṇam avutayunnāḍu
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
avutayāāāāāāāāāāā yunnā

---

tī (16) appuḍu teppalayya ēm
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX . . .
ḍōōōōōōōōōō o kēśavāāāāāāāāāāā

---

cēsiyunnadaṇṭē mikkatambuga kōra mīsambu gīṭi pūli mīs
X X
aha aha

---

amu duvvi guḍlerrajēsi peṭapeṭa dantamulu teppalayya (rāmānē
X XXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha

ḍu) prētakṣi paliki
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
prētāāāāāāāāāā palikāāāāāāāāāā hē cennay

---

(17) ī ura bhīmarājugāru ī teppalayya sainyamu
XXXXXXX . . .
yāāāāāāāāāā aha

---

vāri sainyamu velasi aghōraghōra yuddhamu (rāmānēḍu)
X X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
aha aha

---

jēstayunnāru
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
jestāāāāāāāāāā yunnarōōōōōōōōō cennayyāāāāāāāāā

---

(18) ōri nāyana ōri nāyanā ē vidhamu yuddhamu jēsta yunnā
. . .

---

raṇṭē pōtuṭeddulu rendōyiiiiiii m-a-m-a ade pōraḍinaṭlayi
X
aha balē hadī

---

annāāāāāāāāāā he
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
ōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōō rāmāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāāā

---

he adē (19) potuṭeddulu rendoyi pōraḍinaṭlu mattag
XXXXX . . .
ā ō rāmāāāāāā rāmā

---

ajamulu reṇḍu mallāḍinaṭlu koṇḍalu kondalōyi annāāāāāāāāā
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
ā he he ā

---

gōrāḍinaṭlōyiiiii annāāāāāāāāā
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
cennayōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōō rā

---

(20) he adē a koṇḍalu koṇḍalu(nēḍu) kōrāḍin
XXXXXXXXXXXXX . . .
māāāāāo rāmāāāāāāā

---

aṭlu reṇḍu koṇḍalēmiiiiiiiiii amāāāāāāāāāāāā tāccērinaṭluyi ann
X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
ha

āāāāāāā adē he
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
ōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōō rāmāāāāāāāāāāā ō rāmāāāāā rāmā

The prose narrative sung by the lead singer is punctuated by drumbeats and vocal interjections by the drummer and the cymbals player. As transcribed above, the punctuations are represented by the letter 'X', indicating a single or pair of drumbeats, and the word 'aha', the sound made by the accompanist. A series of two to four dots indicates the particular drum pattern which signals the end of a drum session and the resumption of the narration. In spoken Telugu, when two individuals are conversing, or when one person is speaking to a group, it is

common for the listener or listeners to respond to the speaker with '*ah*', '*aha*', '*ahhh*', or similar interjections. These interjections introduce considerable emotional content into the conversation. The sense that they convey depends upon their placement and how they are spoken. They may indicate agreement, surprise, consent, or a whole range of other emotions. The place where they fall in the sentence is determined by its structure. In the Palnāḍu epic style, interjections function much as they do in ordinary discourse.

When transcribed, the role of these interjections as punctuation is readily apparent. The interjections serve quite well as substitutes for the whole range of punctuation marks employed in writing western languages and modern printed Telugu. They divide the singer's sentences into phrases, set off individual elements in a series, and divide paragraphs into sentences. They also act as question marks, exclamation marks and colons. Following natural rhythms of the language that are appreciated by both the singer and the listener they, perhaps, suggest proper punctuation for written Telugu. Telugu does not yet possess a really standardized system of punctuation.

Occasionally these interjections are also meaningful words. Words such as 'eṭlā' (how), 'ēmmannāru' (what did he say), and 'alāgā' (right) are used where appropriate. The accompanist's role is much less, however, than it is in many other styles of Telugu oral narrative.[3]

A prose passage of variable length is narrated by the lead singer in heightened speech and punctuated both vocally and instrumentally by the accompanists. Towards the end of a passage the style changes to sprechstimme or sung speech. This is followed in turn by a response sung by the accompanists. For the purposes of this discussion, a passage of heightened prose with its concluding sprechstimme line will be referred to as a 'verse' while the sprechstimme line itself will be called the 'transitional melodic line' or simply the 'transitional line'. The accompanists' contribution at the end of a verse will be termed the 'response'. The transitional lines are identifiable throughout Transcription A by the rows of X's which accompany them, signifying the rapid beating of the drum. This drumbeat continues throughout the response, but it is faster during the response than during the transitional line.

An example of a transitional line as sung by Āliśeṭṭi Gāleyya is (*anēka vidhangā rāmānēḍu*) *pamputunnāru* (10). With the exception of *pamputunnāru*, all the words in the line are fillers. They add no relevant meaning in the context, but simply fill out the rhythm and time. They could as well be joined to any one of several other words—such as '*cēsta yunnādu*' or '*āṇṭa yunnāḍu*'. Though the words *anēka*

vidhangā rāmānēḍu are formulaic, a line need not be of the same syllabic length to incorporate these same words. Another line, *(anēka vidhangā) vāru (rāmānēḍu) vastayunnāru* (3), demonstrates how another word can be added in the transitional line without disrupting the time. Both Cennayya and Gāleyya always sang a transitional line that required 3–3·5 seconds.[4] Though the formula and the length of time are both characteristics of the transitional line, there does not seem to be a necessary connection between the two. Formulaic filler words are used only in transitional lines, but the components of the line can be lengthened or shortened to fit the time requirements.

Use of the phrase *rāmānēḍu* adds no surface meaning to the sentence. (It may be translated as 'Rāma today'.) Nevertheless, it is a common component of the transitional line. It is so common, in fact, that its cadence is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the line. It may be shortened to *rāmā*, as in *cēni mīda (rāmā) kanusaiga cēstayunnāḍu* (12); in which case, it still adds no additional meaning to the line. It does, however, help to define the rhythm of the line. Transitional lines without filler words are very infrequent. There are none in the passage transcribed above. Each drummer has a characteristic drum pattern that he begins as soon as he hears the singer going into his transitional line. This pattern continues, but speeds up, during the response.

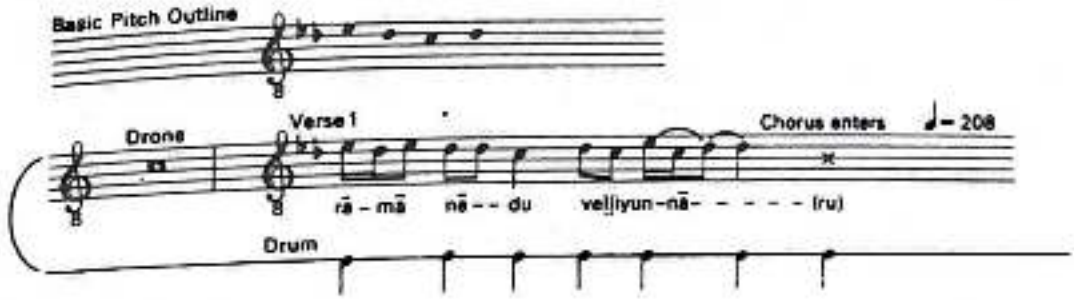
A response consists of the final two words, or syllables, of the preceding transitional line, plus one of several formulaic words. An example of such a response follows the line *ceni mīda (rāmā) kanusaiga cēstayunnāḍu* (12). The *Vantulu* divide the verb *cēstayunnāḍu* into its component parts and each part is chanted in an oscillating chant. The final vowel of each component is lengthened and distorted. Then follow the words *o cennayyā*, in which the final 'ā' is greatly lengthened. In Gāleyya's performance, the entire response occupies about three times as much time as the transitional line. In Cennayya's performance, the response is about four times as long as the transitional line.

While the first two-thirds of the vocal response are taken from the end of the preceding transitional line, the last word is one of a limited selection of names of important deities of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* pantheon. Though not a regular part of the sentences that they conclude, they are not without meaning. Furthermore, they are used selectively. Cennayya or Kēśava—names of the patron God of the principal Heroes and the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*—are by far the most common names used in this position. Other commonly used names are Śankara, Ammayya, and Brahmayya. These names are primarily used when a passage concerns a person who is a particular devotee of that deity or

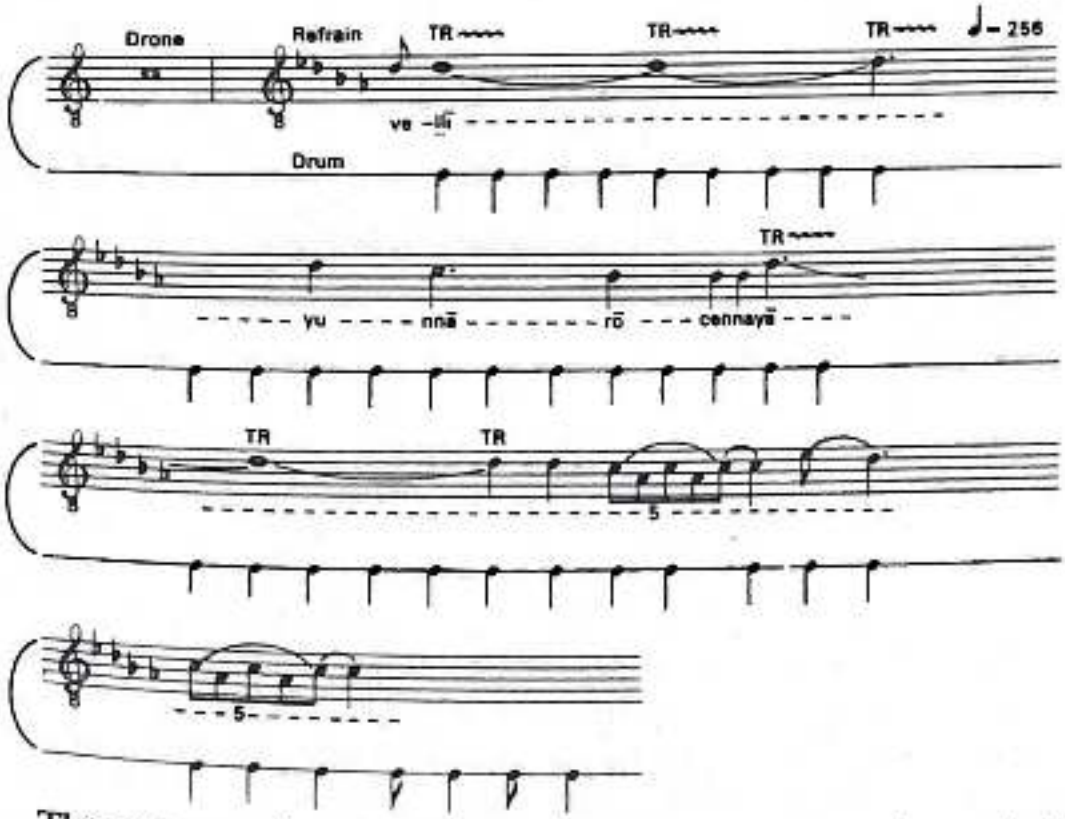
Hero. They are also used when the passage depicts the activities of the deity so named. Thus, a passage about Ala Rācamallu, who is born of Śiva's boon and who is his devotee, will include frequent citation of the name of Śankara in this position. Similarly, the story called 'The Birth of Ankamma' usually has responses that end with the word 'Amayya'. Both the filler words and the non-lexical responses by the accompanying *vantulu* are omitted in translation.

As mentioned above, transitional lines and responses are both accompanied by drumbeats. Beginning when he senses that the singer is about to offer a transitional line, the drummer continues a pattern until the end of the vocal response. He then ends with a distinctive drum pattern that signals the singer to resume the narrative. Though a drumbeat always accompanies the transitional line and response, it does not obviously set a time that determines the rhythm of either. In the transcript, the X's do not indicate the actual number of drumbeats. They simply suggest the very rapid beating of the drum. The number of actual beats depends upon when the drummer picks up the singer's transitional line. The number is also dependent upon the peculiarities of the drummer's own style of drumming.

While the narrative content of the epic is conveyed primarily through the medium of heightened prose, the musical qualities add a great interest to the performance and in fact constitute the characteristic features that structure the epic style. For this reason it will be well to look briefly at the musical characteristics of the transitional lines and responses.[5] Before doing so, however, some general remarks about the form of notation that has been adopted are in order. First, the transcriptions are only examples of melodic ideas presented in the epic. There is great flexibility in the performance of each individual verse and response. Second, all the transcriptions sound an octave below what is written. Third, the pitches are approximate. It must be remembered that there are limitations in using the western notation system, but these are the closest approximation. In Transcription B, for example, D♭ is actually somewhere between D♭ and D. Fourth, the rhythm is also to be considered as an approximation because in an actual performance the rhythm tends to be freer than it appears in the transcription. Fifth, the tonal centre, which is also the drone pitch, varied slightly between C and C♯ during the course of the performance on which Transcription A was based. But for comparative purposes it has always been transcribed at the same pitch level. Finally, the reader should note that the system of notation adopted might tend to make the rapid pulse rates appear slower than they really are. For example, the pulse rate of the drum in Transcription C is 256/minute.

Transcription B

As mentioned above, most of a verse is spoken, but the style changes to *Sprechstimme* towards the end, in what we have called the transitional line. The pitches of the transitional lines do not seem to be set, but there is a melodic idea that occurs in a number of variations when the drums are playing. Transcription B shows this motive as it occurs at the end of Verse 1 in Transcription A. The drum provides a rhythmic pulse but there is no metre (grouping of pulses). The rhythm of the vocal line is relatively free in relationship to the drum pulse, but there seems to be some relationship between the number of drum pulses and the length of the melodic line.

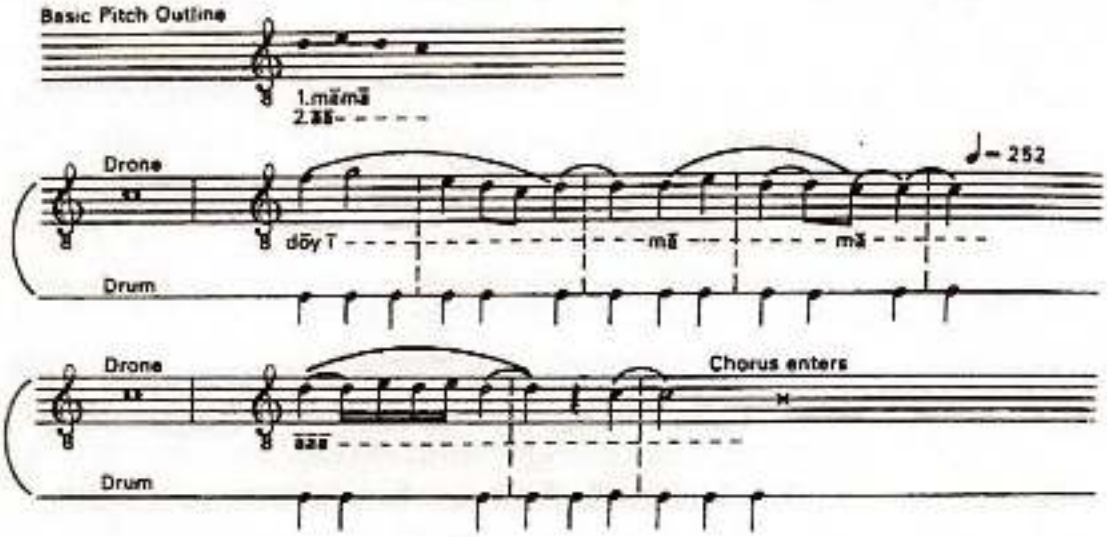
Transcription C

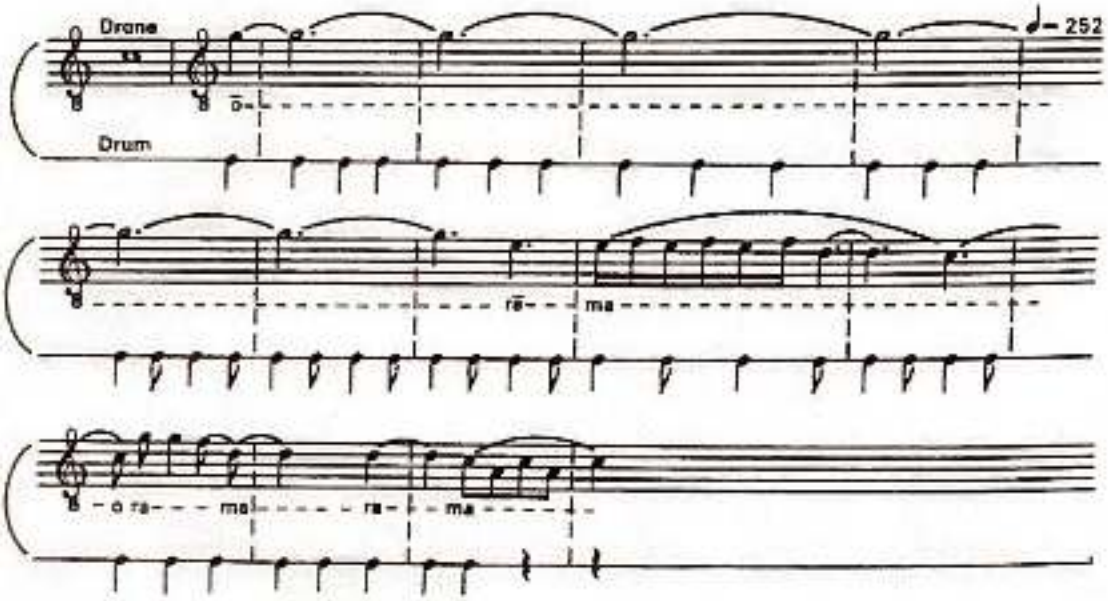


The response shown in Transcription C enters at the point marked X in Transcription B. The long held pitches are tremolos or slow vibratos

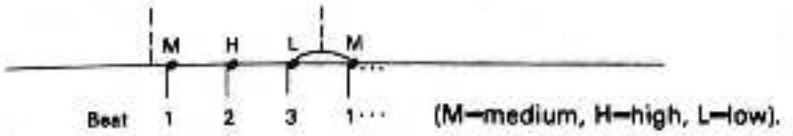
alternating between E♭ and D♭. Note that the tempo is faster than the transition line tempo. Also, the drum pattern at the end is at a faster pulse than the preceding pulse and signals the end of the response. This pattern varies from response to response. Other examples are (2) ♪ ♩ ♩ ♪ ♩ and (5) ♩. ♩ ♩.

Transcription D

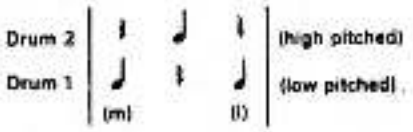


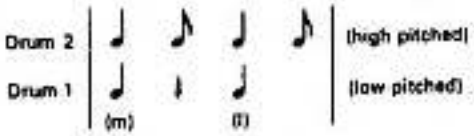
Transcription E

The style of singing used in describing battles is different from what is typically found in the narrative portions. Transcriptions D and E illustrate the musical characteristics of a battle description as found in Verse 18 of Transcription A. The first part of the verse, '*ōri nāyana ōri nāyanā ē vidhamu yuddhamu jēsta yunnāraṇṭe*', is in heightened speech. At *pōtuteddulu* the singer switches to Sprechstimme, but the

pitches are not notated because the pitch patterns do not seem to be set, i.e. the singer varies it each time. The melismata of the drawn-out syllables are notated since there seems to be a general trend for a descending melodic line at that point in each verse of battle description. Transcription D is the lead singer's contribution, while Transcription E is the contribution of the accompanists. In both cases the drums play a metric pattern of three pulses. A dotted bar line is used to indicate that metric stresses are not present. The metric pattern is as follows:



The drummer produces a glissando from the low-level pitch to the medium-level pitch with his hand on the left head of the larger drum. He produces a higher pitch on the right head of the smaller drum by striking it with a stick. Thus the basic drum pattern in Transcription D is as follows:



While the pattern in Transcription E (starting in measure 5) is as follows:

Although the basic drum pattern is the same in Transcriptions D and E, the aural impression is that the drum pulse is twice as fast in E. But, as shown above, the low-pitched drum maintains the same pattern throughout and thus the basic pattern remains unchanged.

A more detailed analysis of the musical elements of the epic style is not within the scope of this study, but the function of the transitional melodic lines and responses in the narrative performance is not difficult to discern. As noted above, the prose passages are punctuated by single or double drumbeats and by vocal interjections from the *Vantulu*. The transitional lines and responses are an additional punctuation to the narration. In Transcription A these lines are readily distinguishable by the line of X's indicating drumbeats. The words of the response function as a kind of paragraph division of the narrative. Often the final word of the transitional line is the only finite verb for

the preceding prose passage. The prose passage is characteristically a sentence-paragraph with several non-finite verbs. Infrequently finite verbs occur outside the transitional line; these, however, are exceptions: virtually all transitional lines contain a finite verb that signals the end of a paragraph.

The musical passages that come at the ends of paragraphs are helpful for both the singer and the audience. When a *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* completes a prose section with a transitional line, he has a free period in which to prepare himself for the next passage. He can do this while the accompanists sing the response. In the free period he can relax, clear his throat, think about what is to come next, or simply join the drummer with the sounds made by his jangling anklet. When Gāleyya sang for extended periods without accompaniment, he occasionally complained that he became tired from singing straight through. He did not have to stand or sing in a loud voice, and he was free to stop at any time that he chose. Hence, his weariness apparently resulted from the necessity of humming and singing his own responses. The pace did not allow him time for mental and/or physical rest and preparation for the next passage.

The transitional responsive lines have a corresponding value for the audience. The 9–12 seconds occupied by the response give the audience a break. This break permits a greater appreciation of a performance. Frequently recurring pauses in the narrative allow for anticipation of what is to follow, integration of what has come before, or the relaxation of attention from the tension of the epic. Listeners may cough, clear their throats, or comment to their neighbours about the performance. They may do so without losing any of the narrative content; and they may do so with the assurance that comes of having internalized the time boundaries of the epic style.

The response also function on another level. *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is bound up with the religious life of Kārempūḍi, greater Palnāḍu, and other areas where it is regularly sung. Whatever the narrative content at a particular moment, however far from the religious focus, that focus is always brought back consciously or unconsciously to the mind of the listener. While the narrative is approachable on a conscious level, the repeated name of the deity functions almost as a devotional chant. Always at the same place in the line, repeated dozens of times in the course of a night's performance, it, in its irrelevance to the narrative, becomes the background before which the entire epic is enacted. The drums, voices, bells, and cymbals add a rich and lively form to the prose structure of the narration.

The style of narration that is used in the descriptions of battles is a

variation on the pattern that is used throughout. The final sections of Transcription A (18–20) are in this style. Though the division of responsibility between the singer and his accompanists is retained, there is an increased use of the drums, more variation in what the *Vantulu* add, and the singer's part becomes more musical. The tempo is very fast, conveying the impression of a battle. Battle descriptions are, however, all very formalized and repetitive. Unlike the *Iliad* or the *Mahābhārata*, the *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha* contains few precise descriptions of battle scenes: wounds suffered, blows dealt, weapons used. The singers of the epic apparently have had little first-hand experience of battle for generations.

Occasionally a *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* will include a verse in a *mārga* or *dēśi* metre. These verses enrich the performance, but they are not a necessary element of style. They are included in much the same way that they might be included in an ordinary conversation. Among the verses quoted are some aphoristic verses of Vēmana. Gāleyya occasionally used a poem written by Vīrabhadrakavi or Eṭukūri Vēnkaṭa Narasayya.[6] Cennayya only rarely used any metrical verses.

The *Vīra Vidyavantulu* also have certain songs that may precede or follow a performance of the epic. These are memorized and sung in praise of the Heroes or their Gods. Some of these songs also accompany *katti sēva* and the sacrifices. These, which are a very different style, will be reserved for a later study.

Within the limits of the traditional style and subject-matter that he has inherited, usually from his father or grandfather, the *Vīra Vidyantuḍu* has considerable freedom to be creative with his material. A detailed analysis of the style and the process of transmission is not intended here. Nevertheless, an appreciation of the epic's role in its local setting requires some understanding of what determines its form in a given performance. The content of the stories is primarily heroic and the title of this translation promises an 'oral epic'. In view of the impact of the work of Millman Parry and Albert Lord upon the course of epic scholarship and the field of oral literature, it might be expected that the present work would take into account Lord's now classic *Singer of Tales*. It should, however, be clear from the brief description given above of the style in which this tradition is sung that the epic will not fit smoothly into Lord's theories of heroic poetry. It must serve instead as further evidence of the diversity of forms that oral and epic literature can take, a diversity which has been documented in Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Poetry* (1977). While this Telugu epic shares many features with the literature studied by Parry and Lord, their theories are not directly applicable to Palnāḍu tradition.

The heroic songs and epics discussed by Lord are all in verse. *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, like almost all Telugu oral narratives, is a combination of prose and verse. Furthermore, it is prose that plays the larger role. Lord has shown how lines in Yugoslavian oral heroic poetry are built up of formulas that fit the metrical restrictions of the style. These formulaic lines are, in turn, used to build up themes from which the story emerges and which allow the improvisation of songs out of stock formulas around heroic themes, whether new or old.[7] An epic which is primarily prose obviously does not fit into this oral-formulaic model. Nevertheless, even a brief look at the style adopted by the *Vīra Vidyantuḍu* reveals narrative elements which are repetitive and which might be called formulaic in any except the most restricted sense used by Lord. Furthermore, these formulas appear to play an important role in allowing the *Vidyantuḍu* rapidly and effectively to sing a long story which is basically prose. The role played by formulas in the singing of long epics that are a combination of prose and verse has not been well investigated. On the other hand, Lord emphasized that the use of formulaic material is an improvisational technique necessitated by the restrictions of verse. But even without the need to fill a particular metre, and even without the need to improvise wholly new subject-matter, a *Vīra Vidyantuḍu* utilizes formulas to give a satisfactory performance of an epic out of inherited material without memorizing. *The Epic of Palnāḍu* style has formulas that are used strictly in prose passages as well as formulas that are used only in the transitional lines and responses. While much of the material is not formulaic, the choice of formulas and the music seem to be one of the main elements which define the style and distinguish it from simple prose narration.

Two examples are suggestive of the role played by these formulas: each time a character in the epic addresses another character, the singer uses a stock form of address—of which there are a number of slight variations—joined with the name or title of the individual who is being addressed: *ōhō nāyanā kumārā* (7), *ōhō ammā vīravidyaladēvi* (8) *ōhō nāyanā oyi arkāri* (10), *ōhō nāyanā reḍḍigāru* (11), *ōhō nāyanā ōyi rājugāru* (14). These formulaic introductions to dialogue raise the level of whatever is being said to the level of a formal address. The same technique is used by all the singers and may be considered an element of the style. Similarly, the contents of the verse lines as discussed above are repeated formulas that are regularly used in the same places for the same purpose.

Although the singers do not memorize their material, the boundaries of what is and is not accepted as part of the epic body are conservatively drawn. Extensive new material is not readily added at

the discretion of an individual singer. The *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, like other residents of Palnāḍu, know some stories which are associated with the Heroes or their Gods but which are not included within the epic cycle. Though widely known and occasionally found in books, these stories are generally concerned with events outside the epic time focus. There are also other stories originating in Palnāḍu which are popular in Andhra but in no way connected with the epic Heroes.[8] None of these stories, however, are ever sung in the epic style. Apocryphal stories of the epic Heroes circulate informally. Stories outside the epic tradition are sung in styles commonly used by other storytellers in the area. Nevertheless, many of the same methods of creating stories and embellishing or simplifying them are to be found in this oral tradition, as in other traditions which have been studied in other parts of the world. Furthermore, there is abundant evidence that stories were once actively added from other sources. It is not clear when this practice started or ended.

The repertoire of a *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* is equal to *The Epic of Palnāḍu* and *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is equal to the repertoire of any one singer. Though *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is sung in virtually the same style as the *Yādava Rāju Katha* from Nellore District, the two epics apparently do not have any stories in common. They do, however, include brief acknowledgements of the other's existence, and they also share common themes.[9] But the Māla-dominated *Epic of Palnāḍu* and the Mādiga-dominated *Yādava Rāju Katha* are distinct from one another and distinct from other stories that are popularly sung in Andhra Pradesh.

Again, this is not to suggest that *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has not drawn upon other traditions; it has. 'The Story of Siriyāla Pāpanna' is well known in South India as the Śaivite story of 'Cirutoṇḍa Bhakta'. Among other written works, it apears in the Tamil *Periyapurāṇum*, in the Telugu *Basava Purāṇam*, and in Śrīnāthuḍu's *Hara Vilāsamu*. Versions of 'The Birth of Ankamma' are similarly well known in oral circles. But the epic boundaries apparently became relatively fixed some time ago; new stories are not now readily added at the discretion of the singer or the insistence of the audience. It is not, however, inconceivable that new material could enter the epic at any time. And the improvisational style of singing would make it easy to incorporate such material.

The exclusiveness of their tradition is a significant difference between the epic sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* and the entertaining repertoires sung by some other groups. A *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* learns the entire epic as he accompanies his father or grandfather. Beyond that, he does not consider learning new stories to be sung in the epic

style. This does not, of course, limit his interest in other traditions; he simply does not sing those other traditions.[10]

Each *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* claims that *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is a tradition of thirty nights' duration. Furthermore, each one claims to be able to sing for thirty nights. This lends support to the idea of an equation between repertoire and epic. The length of a discrete story sung by a Telugu oral singer is regularly measured in nights taken to perform it.[11] For example, the popular *Bobbili Yuddha Katha* is always considered to be a 'three nights story'. The universal assignment of thirty nights and the exclusion of new stories might suggest a fixed oral text that the singer has memorized and simply repeats. A look at the way each individual singer breaks down the epic cycle shows that this is not the case and suggests another understanding of the epic. It is not really a performance of fixed material; it is a creative process.

The *Vīra Vidyavantulu* divide the epic cycle into *kathalu*, or 'stories', and they assign time values to each story. Story A might be called a one-night story, story B a three-night story, and story C a two-night story. But within these divisions, there are often sub-stories, or stories within stories. These stories, or episodes, are also assigned time values of days or hours. Such divisions superficially suggest fixed stories. Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu made an effort to establish how many stories are in the Palnāḍu cycle. Nevertheless, his division of the entire epic into twelve main stories, several of which contain sub-stories, requires some further clarification.[12] Pingaḷi Lakṣmīkāntam, who edited and published manuscripts of the *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, also recognized the epic cycle's division into stories. Thus, he enshrined them in print as he understood them or chose to divide them. Nevertheless, the story boundaries, and likewise the statements about how long it takes to sing an individual story, should not be given any kind of absolute value on the model of printed books or memorized oral literature. Furthermore, the individual stories cannot accurately be said to have any precise beginning or end.

The fluidity of the boundaries employed by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* may be easily appreciated by reference to a few stories that were recorded in the field. On 17 July 1974, Aliśeṭṭi Gāleyya sang a story which he called 'Āraṇagaṇḍla Yuddhamu', or 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla'. The story takes its name from a battle fought between Brahma Nāyuḍu and Uttarēśvaruḍu at the Āraṇagaṇḍla fort. Included in 'Āraṇagaṇḍla Yuddhamu' is an account of the Heroes' pilgrimage to the sacred places of the South. According to the epic, it was this journey which brought the Heroes from Pālamācāpuri to Palnāḍu. On 17 and 20 October 1974 Gāleyya again sang a version of 'Āraṇagaṇḍla

Yuddhamu'. The two accounts differ in many respects—both in detail and in over-all narrative structure. The second version includes a lengthy episode about Pēr Nīḍu's visit to Kanaka Dūrga of Vijayavāda. The journey is undertaken in order to secure a flower from the Serpent World for performing *pūja* to Gai Dūrga, the Śakti of Gaya. This episode (pp. 163–6 of the translation) was not even mentioned in Gāleyya's earlier version. At that time he had agreed to sing the entire epic in a few nights. On 16–18 September 1974 Mēḍukoṇḍūru Cennayya sang 'Āraṇagaṇḍla Yuddhamu'. His version begins only after the Palnāḍu people are settled in Mācerla. The journey from the North, with its various episodes, is included in another story called 'Alugu Rāju Katha'.

Numerous examples of inclusions or omissions by the same or different singers might be cited. There are also different arrangements of the same episodes. The inclusion or omission of an episode in a story, whether that episode occupies a few minutes, a few hours, or even a full day or more, is the prerogative of the singer. Cennayya omitted the story of Bālacandruḍu's previous avatars when he sang 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu'. He mentioned that he was electing to do so because the recording sessions were extending over many more days than had orginally been agreed upon; his drum player had to return to his own village.

The fluidity of a story may also be apparent in a story within a story. An example is 'The Story of Peddanna', which is also known as 'The Wedding of Peddanna'. Gāleyya sang 'The Story of Peddanna' on 10 October 1974. Sung and recorded as a story by itself, it begins with the birth of Peddanna and continues with his trip to the South, marriage, battle with his in-laws, and return with his bride to Pālamācāpuri. Cennayya sang 'Peddanna's Marriage Mission' on 14–16 September 1974. The two accounts differ in several details, but they include essentially the same series of events. Gāleyya, however, also included 'The Story of Peddanna' as a story within a story in his story of 'The Cock Fight'. Gāleyya apparently included the story (pp. 348–56) to account for Peddanna's knowledge of the magic cock which Brahma Nāyuḍu uses in his cock fight with Nāyakurālu. Though the cock is not mentioned in Gāleyya's independent 'Story of Peddanna', Peddanna does camp at the place where the cock is incarcerated. But other particulars of Peddanna's affairs in Kancerla, his wife's home, are also included only in the story within a story. These events—the capture of the celestial horse is an example—are of no particular relevance to the cock fight and could easily have been included in the independent 'Story of Peddanna'.

Since the entire epic is never sung by any one man on consecutive nights, or in a chronological sequence, each of the stories, however the singer chooses to divide them, can function as a semi-independent story. This independence is achieved by the singer's brief resumé of what goes before and what follows after the main story that he sings on a particular occasion. The resumé need not be long. The singer knows the entire epic cycle and the listener is also familiar with the world of the epic, if not the particular story. If persons and events which are unfamiliar to the listener are introduced, they enter a known world among familiar characters. Such a resumé is found at the end of 'The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu' (p. 157). Occasionally this habit of finishing off a story results in an aberration. At the end of 'The Game of Tops', Bāluḍu returns to Mācerla after slaying Bangālā Rāju. This sequence is contrary to the story as it appears in 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu'. There he goes on to the battle of Kārempūḍi and his death. Nevertheless, having started the story of Bāluḍu's fight with Bangālā Rāju, Gāleyya had to finish it and still get Bāluḍu back to Mācerla where the events following the game of tops take place.

The limiting factor of either story or episode is not its specific content, or the order in which it may be told; it is its general acceptance as part of the epic corpus. Beyond that, the singer must use the story in a creative and satisfying manner. The stories and episodes are not randomly told, nor are they told in an order that is dependent upon the singer's whim. The epic as a whole possesses a unity that must be respected. Given that unity, the singer is at liberty to present his material as he sees fit. It may be as straightforward narrative, story within a story, or repetition with different or additional details. The story—as distinct from the words in which it is told—is not to be changed, but it must be told in a manner which satisfies the individual singer and one which is suitable for the audience and occasion.

The division of the epic into stories and sub-stories is recognized by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* and it is creatively used by individual singers to present as much of the epic as the audience and occasion demand. The epic is a collection of stories, and it is presented as such, regardless of where the boundaries of any particular story fall in any one performance. A story that one *Vidyavantuḍu* narrates directly, another *Vidyavantuḍu* (or the same one on a different day) may put in the mouth of a character in a larger story. The epic itself is called *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha*, literally, 'The Story of the Heroes of Palnāḍu'. Thus, the entire epic cycle is a large story broken down into individual stories and sub-stories.

One of the divisions is commonly called 'The Story of Bālacan-

druḍu'. This story, by itself, constitutes a large part of the entire tradition. Within the story are many smaller stories that are specifically concerned with Bālacandruḍu—the boy Hero—and events in which he is the dominant figure. The stories within 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu' are separated according to the main events that take place in them. There is the story of Bāluḍu's visit to Sabbai's house. There is also the story of his conversation with his wife, Māncāla, on the night before his departure for battle. There is the story of the death of his 'brother', the Brāhmaṇ called Anapōtu Rāju. And there is the story of his fight with Narasinga Rāju. There are also several more. The stories vary greatly in length from version to version. Once there is an accepted series of events, however, there are few limitations save the available themes and the *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu's* ability to use them creatively in constructing a story.

At the conclusion of an episode, Gāleyya often says, '*a katha aṭluṇḍagā*', or 'while that story was like that'. The story which is being concluded may be a recognized division of the epic. But the phrase may also simply indicate the shift of action to another topic. At the lower end of what the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* call a *katha*, or story, is the Palnāḍu tradition's equivalent of what Parry and Lord have called a 'theme': 'the group of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style'.[13] Repetitive themes comprise much of the epic as sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*. Some examples of themes are the arrival of a God in the guise of a Brāhmaṇ, the preparation of a warrior for battle, battle descriptions, the toilet of a lady, the departure of a party on a journey, the offering of obeisance to a God or elder, the rejection of a petitioner, and the offering of a human sacrifice on a battlefield. The number of themes is large. Some recur frequently and others no more than twice. Few are ever repeated word for word, even by the same singer. The *Vīra Vidyavantulu*'s use of theme is very similar to that discussed by Lord. The theory of composition by themes need not, therefore, receive extensive treatment here.

One example of a repeated theme with variations should be sufficient. Events associating the births of three of the major Heroes of the epic are described. These are the birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu, the birth of Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, and the birth of Bāluḍu. In each instance the mother is childless and barren prior to receiving a boon leading to the conception of her first son. In each case the woman, after worshipping many Gods, is granted a boon by a deity whom she had previously failed to petition. The different ways in which Gāleyya has presented the birth theme may be seen in the following: Brahma Nāyuḍu (pp. 154–7), Peddanna (p. 147), and Bālacandruḍu

(pp. 243–4). Each of these, though close enough to be considered a theme in its variations, is changed in order to fit the circumstances. The use of themes can, however, result in distortions if the singer is not careful. In 'The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu', Brahma Nāyuḍu's mother is said to be childless and barren even though all versions of the tradition always recognize Peddanna as his elder brother.

The phrases, both prose and musical, which are used to build themes are also formulaic in a broadened sense of the term. The term, however, must be generalized to include prose phrases as well as metrical lines and half-lines. To date no critical examination of the formulas found in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has been made.[14] Once such a study has been completed it may be possible to assess the role of formulas in the improvisatory performance of Telugu epics which combine prose and verse. Meanwhile, it is perhaps safe to say that the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* tend to use formulaic expressions in much the same way as many other story-tellers and public speakers. Anyone who tells the same story more than once or who uses elements of one story in constructing a new one, or anyone who is a regular public speaker tends to become formulaic in his expression. But the formulas in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* will not be found to be useful exclusively for metrical purposes. Thus a formula is simply a group of words which is regularly employed under the same conditions to express a given essential idea.

Formulas utilized by different singers can vary and still serve similar functions. This may be seen in Gāleyya's and Cennayya's respective thematic descriptions of a party making camp at night, rising in the morning, and departing on their journey. Gāleyya always uses formulas which describe the pitching of tents, the setting of the sun, and the party going to sleep, often after cooking and eating their dinner. In the morning, Gāleyya simply states, without any fanfare, that they get up and get on their way. Cennayya, however, uses formulas which pass quickly over the establishment of camp and ignore the setting of the sun. Instead, Cennayya gives a formulaic description of the three crows of the cock followed by sunrise and the deparature. Though shared formulas are absent in the theme, their function corresponds.

An examination of the formulaic structure of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* would necessarily be accompanied by a thorough analysis of the diction employed by the singers. The complexities of diction are a product of the fluidity and resistance to change which are a natural element of the epic style. The dialects of the individual singers vary considerably. Each singer probably learns the style primarily from a close relative and only secondarily from other singers. Local, caste, and individual differences in dialect are readily apparent. They add individuality to a

singer's rendition of the epic. In addition, formulaic material tends to retain archaic forms that have been lost in ordinary discourse. The acquaintance of certain singers—Gāleyya, for example—with written Telugu results in an admixture of literary vocabulary. Since this process has been operating continuously on *The Epic of Palnāḍu* for centuries it is not surprising that the diction is a complex amalgam.

Any study of diction in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* must begin with an examination of the diction of individual singers. Diction can vary greatly. This is true even when two singers are from neighbouring areas and frequently sing at the same festivals. A *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* is naturally most familiar with the dialect of the lower castes of his own area: this is his native speech. But the desire to produce a grand and elevated effect often prompts him to emulate the diction of higher castes, particularly the Sanskrit vocabulary associated with Brāhmaṇs. Archaic forms retained in formulas also contribute to the distinctiveness of the styles. Cennayya reported that his father's dialect was *mōṭu*, or 'crude and uncultured'. He himself had made an effort to 'improve' upon it in his own singing.

One example of the creative use of a natural feature of Telugu diction to enhance a performance may be observed in Gāleyya's frequent use of word doubling, a technique of which he is a master. In spoken Telugu, it is common to double a word by using two words with the same meaning. Often the pair consists of a Telugu word and a Sanskrit word, or a word from some other language which has contributed to the Telugu lexicon. The facility with which Gāleyya performs this kind of vocabulary doubling is readily apparent in the brief passage transcribed above. In the passage are the following pairs of doubled words: *nāṭi–samayam* (time), *prayāṇam–phirayādu* (journey), *mriga–jantulu* (animals), *kharīdu–yiluva* (price or value), *raṇā–yuddhamu* (battle). The combinations include Telugu–Sanskrit, Sanskrit–Sanskrit, Telugu–Persian, and Sanskrit–Persian. In the entire epic, as sung by Gāleyya, and as sung by Cennayya, there is not a single instance of Telugu–English doubling, although such doubling is becoming widespread in present-day spoken Telugu.

The lack of English vocabulary—only one word in many hours of recordings—suggests that the singers are conscious of the language they use and conservative in adding words to the vocabulary when it is obvious that they are from a foreign source. Certain Persian words are included, but the singers are probably not aware that they are foreign to the time period about which they are singing. Cennayya's diction includes much more Urdu vocabulary than Gāleyya's, a reflexion of the larger Muslim population in his home area.

Notes

1 This is a transcript of a recording made on 18 July 1974 in Jānapāḍu, Palnāḍu Tāluk, Guntur District. The lead singer is Āliśeṭṭi Gāleyya and the accompanists are his sons, A. Venkatēśvarlu, A. Saidayya, and A. Tirupāti Rāvu. It is a shorter rendition of the same episode that appears on pp. 166–9 of my translation—the episode in which Teppalayya comes into conflict with the Reḍḍi of Munugoḍu Island over a field of sorghum.

2 Words in parentheses do not contribute anything to the narrative content of the sentences in which they are enclosed. They are fillers included for their sound and time value.

3 In some styles the singer and the accompanist often enter into dialogue where the context makes it appropriate. This virtually never happens in the style employed by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*.

4 I made these measurements with an ordinary stop-watch and the results were not precise.

5 Valerie Jill Poris assisted me with the musical notation and the description of the musical characteristics. She is largely responsible for the substance of this section. The responsibility for any errors or lack of clarity is my own.

6 Eṭukuri Vēnkaṭa Narasayya has published a number of volumes of verse based on Palnāḍu tradition. Each focuses upon one of the major characters.

7 Albert B. Lord, *Singer of Tales*, pp. 68–98.

8 The best-known of these is *Vīra Rājamma Katha* which in its published version makes special note of the fact that Rājamma is from the area where the Heroes of old lived.

9 See 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi', pp. 213–14. Also see Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. II, p. 292, Elmore, *Dravidian Gods*, pp. 102–4, and T. V. Subbārāvu, *Kāṭamarāju Kathalu*, Vol. I, pp. xlix–li.

10 Gāleyya is a friend of one of the most popular *Jangam* singers in Palnāḍu. He always enjoys swapping stories and poems with him and other people who have interest in such things.

11 The time taken to sing an oral story is usually considerably longer when it is before a large audience. Much time is taken up by the singers accepting monetary gifts from the crowd. After each gift, no matter how small, the singer blesses the person who gave it. This giving and receiving of gifts is great fun for everybody and the singer has an opportunity to joke with the audience as he tries to get them to give more money or teases them for what they have or have not given.

12 Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu, 'Telugu Vīragathakavitvamu', pp. 576–595.

13 Albert B. Lord, *Singer of Tales*, p. 68.

14 Some years ago I examined the formulaic structure of Lakṣmikāntam's edition of *Palnāṭivīracaritra*. I found a very high percentage of formulaic lines and half-lines. Few of these appear in Gāleyya's rendition in the same form. Almost all of those which do appear are in lists of clans or similar material. The formulaic qualities of the printed version suggested a classic oral-formulaic origin after the model of Parry and Lord. The problem with this, however, is that while there is a thriving oral tradition, it is not in verse as the manuscripts are. The relationship between the present oral style and the manuscripts requires further investigation. It is also possible that a different style of singing

which has been lost or which remains to be rediscovered once gave rise to the manuscripts which are now available. All the manuscripts seem to have originated several centuries ago. The epic may once have been sung in the style that is evidenced in the manuscripts, but it might also have been adapted when it was committed to writing. The transitional lines that end prose passages in Gāleyya's version are similar to the *manjari dvipada* in which the manuscripts are composed. The battle scenes and some other highly formulaic passages also approach the *manjari dvipada* style. Both the written and the oral versions must be closely examined before anything definitive can be said about their relationship. Such a study will have to take into account all the available manuscripts. The printed versions now available have been too much corrupted by faulty scholarship to be of any use.

Chapter VI

Historical Background

For the people of Palnāḍu, *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, in all its oral and written manifestations, is the history of their land.[1] The inhabitants of Palnāḍu are not unaware that there is more to their history than is contained in *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, but what is remembered of other times is of secondary importance to their interpretation of the present. *The Epic of Palnāḍu* itself seems largely sufficient to satisfy the local need for knowledge of the past. Listeners may ask a singer questions about an unfamiliar episode or an episode which they know in a slightly different version. They may also ask the *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* about the source of his information. Nevertheless, the veracity of the tradition as a faithful account of the past is not likely to be questioned. While Telugu historians have not naïvely accepted the epic as *the* history of Palnāḍu, they have sometimes treated whatever version came into their hands as an essentially faithful account of a few decades of twelfth-century Palnāḍu history.[2]

Occasionally an uncritical acceptance of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* as history has led Telugu people to view the central conflict as having far-reaching consequences in South Indian politics and religion. Historians have more frequently used the tradition as a source of information about religious and social customs, cultural items, and otherwise unavailable information about the twelfth century, or alternatively about the fifteenth century when Śrīnāthuḍu is alleged to have written the book.[3] The sort of attention given to the *Palnāṭivīracaritra* by Telugu historians reflects their acquaintance with and often uncritical acceptance of standard printed editions or single manuscript copies. It also reflects the paucity of written narrative accounts in Telugu for any period of Telugu history. The heroes of Palnāḍu as they appear in the *Palnāṭivīracaritra* are perceived as having been living, vibrant Telugu individuals in a past often peopled with alien rulers. It is a past that is most often accessible only through foreign accounts or through careful and diligent attention to scattered stone and copperplate inscriptions.

In this study we do not propose to examine critically the historical accuracy of any one version of the Palnāḍu tradition, nor do we intend to arrive at a historical consensus by comparing all available versions.

Furthermore, it is not our primary objective to use the tradition as kept by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* to shed light upon historical problems relevant to the time of its inception. Rather, our focus here is on the Palnāḍu tradition as it may be relevant to contemporary Palnāḍu in its role as *the* history of a people and their land. With this in mind, we shall look, in this chapter, at what other sources reveal about Palnāḍu history and the history of *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. We shall go beyond the boundaries of Palnāḍu, as does the epic itself, to see what light reconstructions of South Indian history can shed upon the larger setting into which Palnāḍu history and *The Epic of Palnāḍu* fit. Although our treatment of the subject must necessarily be very limited, it may introduce evidence that will be of use in assessing and explaining how *The Epic of Palnāḍu* might serve to play a continuing role in Palnāḍu culture.

Although *The Epic of Palnāḍu* incorporates stories originating in many different times and places, its essential outlines appear to be the eight-hundred-year-old[4] creative memory of a small segment of South Indian history. The tradition is remembered primarily by those who live in the area with which it is concerned. But in addition to reflecting local events, it also includes episodes involving the great regional powers of the day. Furthermore, it contains stories about Gods and Goddesses known throughout the Telugu country and South India. The setting for one story is Kalyāṇ, the capital of the Western Cālukyas and their sometime usurpers, the Kālacuris. Candavōlu, capital of the Durjayas of Velanāḍu, powerful feudatories of the Cālukya-Cōḷas, is also recalled. Several other neighbouring principalities enter into the epic. Ankālamma and Pōtarāju, popular deities in rural Andhra Pradesh, are important characters. Finally, considerable evidence of the great religious movements sweeping India during the epic period can be found.

An inscription of AD 1103 at Satraśāla, a locally important Śiva temple on the banks of the Kṛiṣṇa River in Palnāḍu, brings to a close a period in Palnāḍu history which is almost totally lacking in inscriptional records. There are very few inscriptions in Palnāḍu that have been dated to a period after the last Ikṣvāku dynasty inscriptions (which have been assigned to the latter part of the third century AD) and prior to the early twelfth century. The Satraśāla inscription reveals that a man called Cāgi Bēta was ruling the area at the time. He was of Haihaya lineage, and his accession to power was brought about by his subordinate, Maṇḍādi Rēvanāyaka. The inscription, as further interpreted, indicates that Bēta was an ally of Vikramāditya VI, the Cālukyan ruler of Kalyāṇ (Western Cālukyas).[5] These early ties with the

Cālukyas of Kalyāṇ on the one hand and the local lord of Maṇḍādi on the other are significant, especially when one compares epigraphic sources with developments in *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. The origin of this branch of Haihayas is not known, but there are indications that it may have split off from the Haihayas of Kōna Maṇḍala in the Gōdāvari Delta.[6]

Inscriptions at Mācerla dating from 1111 and 1113 reveal that Vīrakāma, son of Bēta, succeeded his father and was ruling Palnāḍu.[7] They also show a strong Western Cālukyan influence. Both mention gifts made by a certain Āditya who is believed to have been a Cālukyan general.[8] The first grant is to the temple of the God Ādityēśvara. The second is for the establishment of the Nāga (serpent) pillar on which the record of the gift is inscribed. This Nāga pillar stands today as one of the finest pieces of stone sculpture in Mācerla (see Plate 4). Its high quality engraving, although done by Kanarese engravers, is written in Telugu and Sanskrit.

Vīrakāma was succeeded, probably about AD 1118, by two of his sons, Rājarāja I and Bēta II. They ruled jointly for some time. Bēta II then continued to rule until 1134. The early inscriptions of these brothers do not acknowledge the suzerainty of Kalyāṇ. But a Gurajāla record of Bēta II, of 1129, the first year of his single rule, is issued in the reign of Sōmēśvara III (1127–38), the successor of Vikramāditya Cālukya. It shows that Bēta II moved his capital to Gurajāla. Again the inscription was made to record the establishment of a Nāga pillar. It is probable that the Western Cālukyan influence was still strong, or was strengthening.[9]

The extent of the realm of Haihaya Bēta I and the realm of Bēta II is not known. A record of 1111 from Aḍigopalla, a village that forms the south-eastern tip of an equilateral triangle with Mācerla and Gurajāla, shows that the area was ruled by a man named Kōmāra Dōcaya, the son of Divākara Preggada,[10] and that he did not acknowledge the suzerainty of the Haihaya prince. To one writer, however, the names of these two individuals suggest connections with Karnataka.[11] An inscription from Cinna Gārlapāḍu (dated 1127) commemorates the death of Guṇḍi Reḍḍi in the service of Bēta II. This may indicate an important role in the service of the Haihayas for persons of local extraction.[12] The term 'Reḍḍi' is indigenous to the Telugu country.

Vikramāditya VI reigned over the Western Cālukyan domains from 1076 until 1126. Even before he wrested control of the regime from his brother, Sōmēśvara, he had come to terms with his great contemporary, Kulōttunga I (1070–1118) of the imperial Cālukya-Cōḷas (the continuation of the Eastern Cālukyan line). The political equilibrium

which prevailed when Vikramāditya began his rule lasted for more than forty years, or almost until the death of Kulōttunga I. An apparent understanding between the two great monarchs, whose rule dominated peninsular politics, may well account, to a large extent, for the peace and prosperity which characterized their domains. Coastal Andhra, in particular, benefited during the period.

Shortly before the death of Kulōttunga, Vikramāditya marched on Kānci (in northern Tamilnadu). Kulōttunga's son, Vikrama Cōḷa, was forced to leave Vēngi, in the Gōdāvri delta, to protect this imperial capital. Vikrama Cōḷa's departure left Vēngi open to attack. This was swift to come. It was mounted by Anantāpalayya, a Western Cālukyan general. It is an established fact that his attack came through Palnāḍu. This, combined with the assumption that the Haihayas of Palnāḍu were feudatories of the Cālukya-Cōḷas, has led one writer to accuse the rulers of Palnāḍu of treachery, in allowing Anantāpalayya to enter Palnāḍu and thus assuring the success of his invasion.[13] There is no evidence to suggest, however, that the early Haihayas of Palnāḍu had ever been 'feudatories' of the Cālukya-Cōḷas. On the other hand, there is, as shown above, evidence suggesting that they had been associated with the Western Cālukyas for some time prior to the invasion. Yet, leaving Palnāḍu aside, it is also evident that most of the other Cālukya-Cōḷa feudatories joined the invaders.[14]

The Andhra country was occupied by the Cālukyas for about two decades(1118–37). This Western Cālukyan occupation was not, however, unopposed. The Durjayas who ruled Velanāḍu were feudatories of the Cōḷas. They and some other confederates seem to have kept up the struggle against the Kalyāṇ forces. The details need not concern us here. Gonka Rāju II of Velanāḍu fought against the Western Cālukyan generals until 1137. The Western Cālukyas were finally expelled, and Cālukya-Cōḷa supremacy was re-established (with Gonka Rāju II in control).[15]

At about this time the inscriptional record in Palnāḍu begins to mention individuals who can be tentatively identified with the Rāju family that figures in *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. A Mācerla grant of 1134 registers a gift to a Śiva temple by Anungu Gāma Bhūpati.[16] The Rāju who is the eldest of the line mentioned in the various written and oral versions of the tradition is called Anugu Rāju or Alugu Rāju (*l* and *n* are often interchanged in Telugu). It would seem likely that he is identical to the one in the inscription. An undated inscription from Kottapalli registers a grant of land to a temple made by an Anugu Rāju.[17] Another undated record mentions Pallināṭivīra Anugudēva Mahārāja.[18] Anugu Kāma Rāju (or Anungu Gāma Rāju), however,

was also another name used by Vīrakāma, son of Bēta I. The records, therefore, are not necessarily for the same Anugu Rāju. There is no inscriptional evidence to suggest what relationship Anugu Rāju of the inscription of 1134 bore to Bēta II whose rule immediately preceded his own. It is possible that Anugu Rāju may have been Bēta II's son. (No more definite equation can be made at this time.)

Neither written nor oral versions of the epic offer much information about the immediate ancestry of Anugu Rāju. Several writers have suggested that the portion of the tradition which deals with the journey south from Pālamācāpuri was consciously fabricated and that this was done in order to cover up Bēta II's collaboration with the Western Cālukyas in their invasion of Vēngi. According to one such theory, Anugu Rāju was driven out of Palnāḍu and forced to wander until finally he was obliged to throw himself upon the mercy of the ruler of Velanāḍu. That ruler, according to the theory, then gave him his daughter in marriage and Palnāḍu (as a dowry).[19] This theory was apparently first formulated in ignorance of the record of 1134 of Anugu Rāju at Mācerla.[20] There thus seemed to be a break in the inscriptional record between Bēta II and Anugu. The theory no longer appears satisfactory; neither the inscriptional record nor the epic tradition seems to support it.

All available versions agree on one point: the first military encounter was between the immigrants and Bhīma of Dharaṇikōṭa-Amarāvati. In this, the invaders were victorious. Later, the Rāju of Candavōlu (i.e. Velanāṭi Gonka II) elected to make peace with the invaders rather than confront them in battle. He gave his daughter to Anugu Rāju and he presented Palnāḍu to him (as a dowry). This sequence of events would seem reasonable if the Western Cālukyas had been driven out of coastal Andhra, thus leaving the Haihayas of Palnāḍu strong but without an overlord. Dharaṇikōṭa-Amarāvati lies between Palnāḍu and Velanāḍu. Gonka II of Velanāḍu, the chief Cālukya-Cōḷa feudatory, might have chosen to shore up his western flank with a strong ally rather than fight them, thereby running the risk of further conflict with the Western Cālukyas. This line of supposition is, at best, only a reasonable guess. It does not explain why Anugu Rāju should be credited with a journey from the North to free himself of past sins. If he were simply retaining control of an area which had been ruled by his great-grandfather, Bēta I this would be far fetched. If the bards have indeed glossed over the ties between the Palnāḍu Haihayas and the Western Cālukyas, they might simply have resorted to an old story about how the Haihayas came to Palnāḍu some generations earlier.

Records show that by AD 1147 a Nala Kāma Rāju was ruling as the feudatory of Gonka II of Velanāḍu.[21] Although nominally subservient to the Cālukya-Cōḷa monarch, Gonka II was effectively in control of the Andhra coast. In an inscription of 1163 the ruler of Palnāḍu, referred to as 'Anugu Kāma Rāju', is described as being the son of Kāma Rāju and Mailāla Dēvi.[22] Gonka Rāju's daughter in the epic tradition, who is married to Anugu (Kāma) Rāju and called Mailamā Dēvi, can probably be equated with Mailāla. In short, the outlines of the events as they appear in oral and in written tradition, except for the journey from the North, seem to be supported by inscriptional records.

In the epic, Anugu Rāju has two additional wives. The sons of one of these wives, Vīravidyala Dēvi, are the young Rājus whom Brahma Nāyuḍu serves. This Velama minister is portrayed as Regent of the Mācerla division of the realm. Inscriptional records offer no information about this wife of Anugu, but the epic tradition gives a hint as to who she might have been. In both the written and the oral versions of the epic, Vīravidyala Dēvi is featured as the first wife of Anugu Rāju. As such, she has three sons. Nevertheless, Nalagāma Rāju, son of Mailamā Dēvi, is made sole ruler. Vīravidyala Dēvi is also said to have come from the North with Anugu. If the supposition of association between the Haihayas of Palnāḍu and Kalyāṇ is correct, it would be reasonable to find that Vīravidyala Dēvi was the daughter of another Western Cālukyan feudatory. There is, however, no traditional or inscriptional evidence concerning Vīravidyala Dēvi's origin. But in the generation of her sons, all versions of the epic depict Brahma Nāyuḍu as requesting brides for Vīravidyala Dēvi's sons from the ruler of Kalyāṇ, the Western Cālukyan capital. Brahma Nāyuḍu is at first refused the brides from Kalyāṇ on the grounds that he is a follower of Viṣṇu whereas they are Śaivites. But later he helps the rulers of Kalyāṇ with the conquest of a fort and the consequent settlement of a family feud. He is then given girls for his charges.

By 1156 the Kālacuris had usurped the throne of Kalyāṇ. Their reign lasted until about 1183, when the Cālukyas regained control of Kalyāṇ. In the epic the ruler who is approached by Brahma Nāyuḍu for his daughter is called Sōma Rāju or Vīra Rāju. It is probable that this Sōma Rāju is the Kālacuri, Sōvi Dēva (Sōma Dēva), the prince who ruled from Kalyāṇ between 1167 and 1177.[23] The stories of 'The Deaf-Mute Rāju' and of 'Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi' concern the family history of Sōma Rāju. In the epic, when Brahma Nāyuḍu gains the daughters of Sōma Rāju, a large party of retainers accompany him back to Mācerla. In the party are the girls' brother, Komma Rāju, and his son, Ala Rācamallu.

Although no corroborating evidence for the alliances exists, the epic accounts match well with the historical evidence for the time periods involved. All epic accounts place the marriages during Brahma Nāyuḍu's rule at Mācerla and before his flight following the cock fight. If the daughters of Sōvi Dēva were given during his reign (1167–77), or shortly thereafter, such a chronology fits well with the chronology that has been worked out for the events given in the epic. This chronology places the final battle in about 1182.[24] In the epic, in addition to the alliances with the Malidēva Rājus, Nalagāma Rāju's daughter is married to Ala Rācamallu, the grandson of Sōma Rāju. This suggests some long-standing ties between the Haihayas of Palnāḍu and the Kālacuris. If there were such family ties it would be very plausible that a son of Sōvi Dēva might have sought asylum for himself and his attendants in Palnāḍu at the time of his brother's accession in 1177 or at some time between then and 1183 when the Cālukyas regained the throne of Kalyāṇ. Unfortunately no inscriptions of the Haihayas of Palnāḍu dated after 1164 are to be found.

Although inscriptions from Palnāḍu are silent about Brahma Nāyuḍu himself, and about the other Velama heroes of the epic, a number of historical clues indicate the likelihood of such persons being active in Palnāḍu at the time. As already mentioned, the Haihayas of Palnāḍu may well have broken off from the Haihayas of Kōna Maṇḍala in the Gōdāvari Delta to the north of Palnāḍu. This is the direction which the epic accounts give as their homeland. But though the Rājus (according to inscriptional and epic evidence) came from the North, the power struggles of Palnāḍu were strongly influenced by the Cālukyas of Karnataka in the West. Several Western Cālukyan names appear in inscriptions. The names show that they were powerful ministers, men capable of making major donations. The name of Brahma Nāyuḍu himself (or Brahmayya as he is also called), while it does not actually appear in Palnāḍu inscriptions, is a familiar one. Individuals named Brahma appear frequently in the Telugu *Basava Purāṇa* which focuses on contemporary events in Kalyān. The great general who overthrew the Kālacuris in the name of the Cālukyan ruler, Sōmēśvara IV, in 1183 was also named Brahma.[25] A somewhat earlier general named Brahma appears as the first known member of the Rēcerla family. This is the Velama family to which the 'Brahma Nāyuḍu' of the epic tradition belongs. This Brahma and his overlord, Kākati Bēta I, were subordinates of Trailōkyamalla Sōmēśvara I (1044–68), a monarch of the Western Cālukyas.[26] It would not be impossible to suppose that one of these men with the name of Brahma might have become associated with events in Palnāḍu and that later

stories about him might have been combined with stories about the Haihaya Rājus. It is more than likely that the name was a popular one among Cālukyan ministers and generals. A different general named Brahma of the Rēcerla family might have continued to support the lords of Kalyāṇ, even after the Western Cālukyas had, for the most part, been driven out of coastal Andhra and Palnāḍu.

Epic accounts always show the Rājus and their Velama ministers journeying together from the North, bringing their patron God, Cennakēśava (Cennakēśvara), with them. One such account, the version of Gāleyya, however, includes both direct and indirect evidence that Brahma Nāyuḍu's people came from Karnataka. Some of this evidence can also be found in the printed editions. But this feature has never been discussed in the literature. One may suppose that any contradiction of the general impression that the Rājus and their Velama ministers came from the North has been unpalatable. At one point Gāleyya describes Brahma Nāyuḍu as a man born in a family of Kuntala.[27] Other versions mention that Bāluḍu was born in a family of Kuntala.[28] The name 'Kuntala' probably first referred to the North Kanara District and to parts of Mysore, Belgaon, and Dharwar Districts. In the time period with which we are concerned, however, it was used to designate the entire Karnataka. The Cālukyas were rulers of Kuntala, or Karnataka: the terms were used interchangeably.[29] Anugu Rāju and his offspring in the epic are never associated with Kuntala. The other Rājus of the epic, the Rājus from Karnataka, are always referred to as 'Rājus of Kalyāṇ', the capital of Kuntala or Karnataka. This difference in designation suggests that Brahma Nāyuḍu might have come from somewhere in Karnataka other than Kalyāṇ. Other indirect evidence in the Gāleyya version supports this view.

Gāleyya tells a curious story about the patron God of the Palnāḍu people:

> The Patron God of the Palnāḍu people was, at first, Śrīranga Nāyakuḍu. One day the men of Palnāḍu went hunting led by Alugu Rāju. While the elders were hunting, they chanced upon a forest hermitage in which the venerable Cennakēśvarasvāmi was the manifestation of Viṣṇu. They brought him back to the city and made him their patron God. He is the same Cennakēśvarasvāmi who was brought here from Pālamācāpuri. Then they cast aside Śrīranga Nāyakuḍu and worshipped this manifestation of Viṣṇu. . . .[30]

If the Haihayas came from the North, it would be curious that their patron God should have been the Lord of Śrīrangam, Śrīrangam is near Tirucunāpalli, in Tamilnadu. It would also seem unlikely that they should have cast aside such a God for Cennakēśvara.

Cennakēśvara is a popular South Indian deity whose greatest temple, built in 1117, is located in Bēlūr between Bangalore and Mangalore in Karnataka. The story becomes more plausible when we see how the epic depicts Brahma Nāyuḍu and how such a depiction relates to what was apparently happening within the religious life of South India. The dominant Haihayas in the epic are depicted as Śaivites. (They are often also said to have had Cennakēśvara as their patron God.) Yet Brahma Nāyuḍu is depicted as: (1) a great devotee of Viṣṇu; (2) the builder of the temple of Cennakēśvara in Mācerla; (3) a great general; (4) a Vaiṣṇavite guru; and (5) an incarnation of Viṣṇu. He seems also, as mentioned above, to have had closer associations with Karnataka than did the Rājus he serves.

The great Vaiṣṇava reformer Rāmānujācarya, born in 1017, spent most of his life and did most of his work in Śrīrangam. Yet we are informed that:

> In the latter years of his age he was subjected to persecution by the Cōḷa prince of his time, who wanted him to renounce Vaiṣṇavism for Śaivism, in consequence of which he took refuge in 1096 A.D. in the dominions of the Hoysala Yādava princes, who reigned in Mysore and whose capital was Dvārsamudra, the modern Haḷībīd.[31]

We are told that Rāmānuja converted some of the local princes. Bēlūr, the site of the great Cennakēśava temple, was a part of the same kingdom as Haḷībīd. Indeed, Bēlūr and Haḷībīd were neighbouring cities. The temple at Bēlūr was built just twenty years after Rāmānuja came to the Hoysala realm. The people of Palnāḍu are said in the epic to have served originally as devotees of Śrīranga Nāyakuḍu and then to have switched their devotion and loyalty to Cennakēśava. This solution may seem too simplistic, but the story makes perfect sense. If the Velama family to which Brahma Nāyuḍu belonged were associated in one way or the other with the Vaiṣṇava sect led by Rāmānujācarya, then the theory that they brought their patron God, Cennakēśava, with them when they came from Karnataka would become entirely plausible.

The form of Vaiṣṇavism championed by Brahma Nāyuḍu in Palnāḍu appears, according to the epic tradition, indebted to Rāmānujācarya in several respects. Mācerla is one of the great Vaiṣṇava centres in Andhra Pradesh. Though it has apparently declined somewhat in importance, the Mācerla Temple still draws very large crowds, from near and far, for its yearly festival. B. S. L. Hanumantha Rao has put forward the view that Brahma Nyuḍu was a radical socio-religious reformer and that, as such, he made the Mācerla Cennakēśava Temple

the centre of his activities.[32] This view, based on published versions of *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, perhaps puts too much emphasis on the radicalism of Brahma Nāyuḍu; nevertheless, the methods of conversion adopted by Palnāḍu Vaiṣṇavites appear to have been very similar to those of Rāmānuja. 'Rāmānuja insisted on the caste rules in food and other things but converted the Śūdras into Vaiṣṇavism and allowed even the Pancamas [untouchables] the privilege of visiting certain temples once a year.'[33] Moreover, Palnāḍu tradition suggests that Brahma Nāyuḍu went much further and that he accepted the 'fifth' class of castes into the fold of corporate religious life. Today the Māla *Vīra Vidyavantulu* are devotees of Mācerla Cennakēśava. Other neighbouring temples of Cennakēśava are also particularly venerated by Mālas.[34]

With Brahma Nāyuḍu as its central figure, *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is strongly Vaiṣṇavite. But another great contemporary religious movement, Vīra Śaivism, is also a powerful force within the epic. Basavēśvara of Karnataka and Paṇḍitārādhya of Andhra, the chief exponents of the militant Vīra Śaiva sect, were both alive during the period on which Palnāḍu tradition focuses. Basavēśvara was, in fact, the minister of Bijjala, the Kālacuri ruler of Kalyāṇ (1162–8). Bijjala's reign immediately preceded that of Sōvi Dēva whom we have equated with Sōma Rāju of the epic.[35] Although neither Basavēśvara nor Paṇḍitārādhya is actually mentioned as a character in any version of the epic, several of the important Śaivites who do appear are shown as coming from Kalyāṇ. Furthermore, the form of Śaivism that is depicted in the epic appears to be a form of Vīra Śaivism as it was then developing both in Kalyāṇ and in other parts of Karnataka and the Telugu country.

Gāleyya's version suggests that the cult of Ankālamma was brought from Kalyāṇ during the epic period. The history of the worship of this Goddess is even less well known than the histories of the rise of Rāmānuja's Vaiṣṇavism and Basava's Śaivism; yet Gāleyya's allegation that Ankālamma came from Kalyāṇ may be supported by at least one inscription. An inscription in the courtyard of the Ankālamma Temple in Kārempūḍi dated 1154 calls Kalyāṇaśakti the Sthānapati—'Lord of the Spot'—of the Śiva temple which shares Ankālamma's courtyard.[36] A comparison between this and the account of how Ankālamma came to Palnāḍu in 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi' supports the connection.

Evidence for the development of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* and the associated cult is scanty; nevertheless, there are indicators, and it is to these that we now turn.

Inscriptional records of the semi-autonomous Haihaya Rājus—who

sometimes gave their allegiance to Kalyāṇ and sometimes to Velanāḍu—end at about the time of the beginning of the disturbances that culminated in the Battle of Kārempūḍi. This view assumes the accuracy of AD 1182 as the approximate date for the battle. Inscriptions which begin reappearing soon after the date of the battle all acknowledge the reigns of Kākatiya monarchs. Kākatiya domination of Palnāḍu affairs continued until the fall of Warangal to Muslim invaders in 1324. During that century and a half, there seems to have been active building and development in Palnāḍu. The many inscriptions available for this period reveal strong support for religious and sectarian institutions, especially temples, both Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite.

The Cult of the Heroes probably developed at this time into something like its present form. A Mācerla inscription, *c.*1315, records gifts offered for the purpose of conducting worship of the Heroes. The donor was an officer of Kākati Pratāparudra.[37] Several inscriptions of the Kākatiyas indicate support of Cennakēśava and Śiva, the patron deities of the Heroes, in Palnāḍu. No other inscriptions of the Kākatiya period mention the Heroes. There is, however, a remarkable piece of literary evidence for the level of development which the Cult of the Heroes and the epic tradition had attained during or soon after the Kākatiya period. This is found in the *Krīḍābhirāmamu*.

The *Krīḍābhirāmamu* of Vinukoṇḍa Vallabharāya is, on one level, a parody of the *prabhanda* style of Śrīnāthuḍu, Vallabharāyuḍu's great contemporary.[38] Since no other extant parodies are found in classical Telugu literature, this poem is unique. It is a pornographic attack upon the moral, religious, and literary pretensions of the upper castes. The book records an excursion through the streets of Warangal (Ōrugallu), the capital city of Kākatiya Pratāparuḍra. Two young men, a Brāhmaṇ and a Vaiśya, set out early in the morning to visit courtesans. The poem records both what they see and their comments on what they see. Through the eyes of these two young men, those things generally held most respectable by the upper castes are treated with disrespect; and vice versa. Two fighting cocks receive the kind of praise which is usually directed at the Brāhmaṇical Gods, while the higher Gods of the respectable people are made to appear ridiculous. It is within this context of the high being brought low and the low elevated that the following passage must be appreciated:

116 Playing the sounds 'taka, dhum, dhum, kiṭāt' in fast time on heroic percussion, with agreeable inner *yati* and accompaniment, a woman sang a heroic *dvipada prabhanda*. The attendant princes began to whistle.

117 Roaring and shouting, transported by heroism, one man beat his thighs

with a staff. Positioning his legs as if about to shoot an arrow, one man acted the part of an archer. With bulging eyes and fearsome glances, one man uttered cries, exceedingly loud. Skilfully posturing his arms and shoulders, one man leaped expansively over the earth.

One drummer shouted challenges. One man pranced a steed in the open field. Passing a censer through the great assembly, the woman sang of the Palnāḍu Heroes.

118 The fearless sixty-five heroic Palnāḍu brethren have Gangamma of Gurajāla as their patron Goddess and Pōtulayya of battle as their companion.

119 Āruvalli Nāyakurālu's evil strategy, the cock fight, and inter-caste dining were the principal causes of the destruction of the great Palnāḍu Heroes.

120 One prince wore yellow sandalwood paste, fine sacred rice, garlands of red flowers, hair tied up in black braids, tasselled badges of heroism on his feet, a clean new waist cloth, and famous jewellery.

121 Nallagonda and Nagarikallu are among the heroic places on the earth; Pallēru and Nāgulēru form the boundaries of Palnāḍu.

122 Here all the like-minded tributary princes ate together, dining inter-caste. Here the fair-eyed Āruvalli Nāyakurālu conceived her plots and schemes. Here Pīlasāni bathed in the river of fire to test her purity. Here the Golla half-brothers, rulers of the earth, wagered their land and fought.

The five mighty warriors died as Heroes. Proud-spirited, here they engaged in battle. This is what the elders in Palnāḍu say, as they tell the stories of old.

123 Except for the grace of Cennuḍu and Śrīgiri Linga, how could Palnāḍu have gained such stature? Tell me, with only the rain which falls from the sky in the month of Uttara, can seeds produce mustard amidst the slate?

124 Why praise them with highest praises, calling them he-lions when they are intoxicated and mad in battle? In that land even the budding maidens and farm wives are he-lions when they take the superior position in coition.

125 Vaiśya Rāju! Look at that stone slab on which the triangle rests near the spear. It is painted with lime plaster pictures; it is the history of Sīla Brahma and the other Heroes.

126 May these Heroes bring our business to fulfilment. Let's go! In a few steps we will see the cement enclosure of Ēkavīrā, its gate adorned with neem buds and worshipful garlands.[39]

There is no reason to question the veracity of what is revealed here about the cult or the epic tradition as it had developed at the time *Krīḍabhirāmamu* was composed.

Somasēkhara Śarma has calculated that Vallabharāya, the author of *Krīḍābhirāmamu*, must have flourished in the early fifteenth century

A D[40] If this is correct, the author must have been separated from the time about which he was writing by about one hundred years. Whether or not his description accurately reflects the development of the epic in Pratāparudra's Warangal during the first quarter of the fourteenth century, he was not far from his subject either in time or in space. The account seems to reflect the development of both the cult and the epic one or two centuries after the events upon which they were based.

As is true today, Cennakēśava and Śrīgiri Linga were the patron Gods of the Heroes; the Heroes numbered sixty-five (or sixty-six); and Pōtarāju was part of the epic's cast of characters. In *Krīḍābhirāmamu* the patron Goddess of the Heroes is said to be Gurajāla Gangamma. In the various modern versions, she is Ankālamma. Nevertheless, the two are not so different from one another. Both are prominent Palnāḍu Goddesses and as such are classified as Śaktis by the people of the area. The difference may be historical: the particular association of the Heroes with Ankālamma who resides in Kārempūḍi may have developed as the tradition became more securely fixed in that place. On the other hand, the poet may have simply used the word 'Gangamma' to signify the Śakti of Gurajāla as a device for the convenience of rhyme. Gangamma is, however, still worshipped in Kārempūḍi. Her small idol sits outside the north-west corner of the compound of the Temple of the Heroes, between the temple and the river.

Reasons given for the epic conflict, places involved, and most of the other particulars in the *Krīḍābhirāmamu* seem to square with the epic today. Nevertheless, some important details of the epic as now sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* are not mentioned. Brahma Nāyuḍu is not said to be an avatar of Viṣṇu; he may not yet have been deified. It also seems possible that the story of Bālacandruḍu may have been undeveloped. It is currently among the most popular parts of the epic, but it is not mentioned in Vallabharāya's poem. Although the epic and the cult are not precisely the same as they are today, they seem to have been developing in a recognizable direction. Although the cult existed elsewhere, it seems, even then, to have been strongest in the Palnāḍu countryside where it originated. The *dvipada* metre mentioned in the poem is closely related to the style of singing used by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, and it is the metre in which the manuscripts are written. Furthermore, the actions accompanying the performance are reminiscent of those adopted by *Vidyavantulu* at the present time. No women sing the epic now, but it is not inconceivable that they might have in the past. Female singers are not unknown among Telugu oral narrative singers today.

Inscriptions from Kārempūḍi are evidence for the continuous

support of the Cult of the Heroes in Palnāḍu. An inscription of 1333 records the erection of the *mukha maṇḍapam* (front porch) of the Temple of the Heroes.[41] Another, dated 1445, records the erection of Nāyuḍa Mēda,[42] a tower built over the spot where Brahma Nāyuḍu is said to have buried his spear. When the Cennakēśava Temple in Kārempūḍi was repaired in 1625 it was noted that this temple was originally built by the Heroes.[43] Other inscriptions in Kārempūḍi, and elsewhere in Palnāḍu, might on examination yield further information about the development of the Cult of the Heroes.

The flourishing state of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* in the nineteenth century is revealed by Robert Sewell, who toured the area in 1879. In his *Lists of the Antiquarian Remains in the Presidency of Madras* (1882), Sewell singled out Palnāḍu for special attention. In an appendix he included a summary of the epic, as well as details of associated archaeological sites in Kārempūḍi and a few other villages.[44] His summary of the epic is based on the poem (mentioned above) written by Muḍigoṇḍa Vīrabhadra in 1862. The summary of this poem comes quite close to the oral versions recorded from the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, but it omits some episodes—significantly those centred on Kalyāṇ—and several others of ritual importance. It is not clear whether these omissions were made by Vīrabhadra or by Sewell. Nevertheless, Vīrabhadra was undoubtedly acquainted with all the written and oral versions extant in Palnāḍu during his day.

Sewell writes:

> The great historical interest of the Palnāḍ centres in the chiefs known as the 'Palnāṭi Vīrulu' or Palnāḍ Heroes, whose memory is fondly cherished by all the inhabitants. Temples were erected in their honour, poems have been written recounting their deeds, Hindus and Mussalmans vie with one another to do them reverence on their grand festival day once a year, villages are named after them, and songs sung, and the villagers are never tired of narrating the legends to visitors and pointing out the localities where each event is said to have taken place. Being anxious to have as complete an insight as possible into the traditions of the country, I obtained the loan of a copy of the latest poem on the subject, written by Muḍigoṇḍa Vīrabhadra in 1862, which was said to embody in full the local legends that had been handed down from father to son; and I found that my interest in visiting the country in question was very greatly stimulated by a perusal of the story. For, besides the natural interest aroused by personal visits to places alluded to in such legends, I found that my knowledge of their favourite romances at once established friendly relations between myself and the villagers with whom I came in contact; and I shall not readily forget the kindly courtesy; I met with at their hands.
>
> As a preliminary, therefore, to a slight sketch of some objects of archaeological interest in Palnāḍ, I give a summary of the poem relating to the Heroes.

Everything in Palnāḍ is so bound up with these stories that it is impossible fully to appreciate the antiquarian lore of the place without first comprehending the traditions which lie nearest the heart of the people. The summary, moreover, though very slight, will convey an idea of the form of many local poems in Southern India which it would perhaps be well bye and bye to introduce to European residents in some palatable shape.[45]

Sewell recognized the contribution that local tradition could make to an appreciation of Palnāḍu past and present. He also saw the desirability of making *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, and other local traditions, accessible to a wider audience. The remainder of the present study is concerned with the sense in which 'everything in Palnāḍ is so bound up with these stories'.

Notes

1 Most people do not make any noticeable distinction between the various versions. The singers, however, recognize their stories as the final authority, even above the manuscripts they sometimes possess.

2 For an example of this type of approach, see B. Venkatakrishna Rao, *History of the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi (610–1210 A.D.)*, (Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi, 1973), pp. 569–74.

3 See this kind of approach in M. Somasēkhara Sarma, *History of the Reddi Kingdoms (Circa 1325 A.D. to circa 1448 A.D.)* (Waltair: Andhra University, 1948).

4 For an account of how the time of the battle and other events were determined, see Śrīnāthuḍu *Palanāṭivīracaritra*, Pingaḷi Lakṣmikāntam, ed. pp. 7–19.

5 V. Yasoda Devi, 'The History of the Andhra Country, Ch. II: The Haihayas', *Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society*, XIX (July 1948), 29.

6 Ibid., pp. 28–9.

7 Government of India, *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. X, Nos. 66 and 72, pp. 24–6, 29.

8 Yasoda Devi, 'Andhra Country', *JAHRS*, XIX, p. 30, and V. Rangacharya, *A Topographical List of the Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency (collected till 1915) with Notes and References*, Vol. II (Madras: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, 1919), p. 805.

9 Yasoda Devi, 'Andhra Country', *JAHRS*, XIX, 30.

10 Ibid., pp. 29–30.

11 M. Ramarao, *Inscriptions of Āndhradēsa*, Vol. II, Part I (Tirupati: Sri Venkatesvara University, 1968), p. 283.

12 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'The Chālukyas of Kalyāṇi', in *The Early History of the Deccan*, ed. G. Yazdani (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 356–7.

13 B. Venkatakrishna Rao, *Chalukyas of Vengi*, p. 485.

14 Ibid., p. 485.

15 Ibid., p. 486.

16 M. Ramarao *Inscriptions*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 288.

17 Ibid., p. 217.
18 Yasoda Devi, 'Andra Country', *JAHRS*, XIX, 32.
19 B. Venkatakrishna Rao, 'The Haihayas of Palnad', *JAHRS*, Vol. XII, Part I (Oct. 1948), 49–53.
20 M. Ramarao, *Inscriptions*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 288.
21 Government of India, *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. X, No. 120, p. 56, and M. Ramarao, *Inscriptions*, p. 286.
22 Government of India, *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. X, No. 155, p. 75.
23 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'Chalukyas', pp. 458–9, 466.
24 Śrīnāthuḍu, Mallayya, and Koṇḍayya, *Palanāṭivīracaritra*, ed. Pingali Lakṣmikāntam and Avasarāla Sūryarāvu, pp. 7–19.
25 A. S. Altekar, 'The Yādavas of Seuṇadeśa', in *The Early History of the Deccan*, ed. G. Yazdani, pp. 523–4.
26 N. Venkataramanayya and M. Somasekhara Sarma, 'The Kākatīyas of Warangal', in *The Early History of the Deccan*, ed. G. Yazdani, pp. 577–8.
27 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 296.
28 Śrīnātha, *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, Akkirāju Umākāntam, ed., p. 59, and Śrīnāthuḍu, Mallayya, and Kondayya, op. cit., n. 24 above, p. 387.
29 D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1971), pp. 188–92.
30 See 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', pp. 160–1.
31 R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism, and Minor Religious Systems* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1965. First published in 1913), pp. 51–2.
32 B. S. L. Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra* (Guntur: Tripura sundari, 1973), pp. 254–9.
33 Ibid., p. 254.
34 Conversations with Cennayya and Gāleyya, 1974.
35 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'Chalukyas', pp. 461–2.
36 V. Rangacharya, *A Topographical List of the Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency*, Vol. II, p. 810.
37 M. Ramarao, *Inscriptions*, p. 288.
38 Vinukoḍa *Vallabharāya*, *Krīḍabhirāmamu*, with an introduction by B. V. Singarācārya (Macilīpaṭnam: M. Seshachalam and Co., 1972), pp. xv–xvi.
39 Ibid., pp. 27–9.
40 M. Somasēkhara Śarma, *History of the Reddi Kingdoms*, pp. 512–13, and N. Venkataramanayya and M. Somasekhara Sarma, 'The Kākatīyas of Warangal', in *The Early History of the Deccan*, ed. G. Yazdani, p. 689.
41 Robert Sewell, *Antiquarian Remains*, p. 59.
42 V. Rangacharya, *Topographical List*, p. 811.
43 M. Ramarao, *Inscriptions*, p. 286.
44 Robert Sewell, *Antiquarian Remains*, Appendix A, pp. i–xxviii.
45 Ibid., Appendix A, p. 1.

Chapter VII

The World of the Epic

In the Telugu country outside Palnāḍu or outside the Cult of the Heroes, *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is but one tradition among many.[1] The epic stories often include universal themes. Sometimes these can be used to engender Telugu regionalistic feelings. Nevertheless, such stories have no particular precedence over stories from a variety of other sources. Within the limited setting in which *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has developed, however, it has further dimensions and it plays a more profound role. An intimate relationship exists between the world of the epic and the world of Palnāḍu. This may be perceived in terms of the epic time, space, and its inhabitants. An examination of the nature of this relationship may shed light upon the epic as a process and upon the society in which it has developed. What we seek is not an 'objective' picture of how Palnāḍu society has functioned; our concern is with the 'inner' or 'mythic' conceptions of things—of locality, history, religion, society, culture, geography, and values.

The over-all structure of space in Gāleyya's version of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is threefold: *dēvalōka* is the world of the Gods; *naralōka*, the world of men; *nāgalōka*, the world of serpents, the underworld. Of the three worlds, *naralōka* is the most important. It is the stage upon which most of the epic action takes place. *Dēvalōka* and *nāgalōka* have no inherent importance. They only become important because of their occasional influence on events on the level of mankind, *naralōka*. Within this threefold division of space, only *naralōka* has a well-defined geography; only in *naralōka* can places be precisely mapped. *Dēvalōka* and *nāgalōka* are essentially non-geographic. Located respectively above and below *naralōka*, they are approachable only through special kinds of places and by particular individuals. *Nāgalōka* is entered through trees and caves; and *dēvalōka* is approachable by the will of the Gods or by the exercise of some poorly defined powers which not all men gain or possess. In its location between *dēvalōka* and *nāgalōka*, *naralōka* dominates the other two worlds. *Naralōka* is, thus, the spatial centre of the whole epic cosmos. (We shall return to this point later.)

Time in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is nominally divided into familiar classical units: *Krita*, *Trēta*, *Dvāpara*, and *Kali* ages. These divisions

are often cited in formulaic passages, and they refer to *all* time. Nevertheless, virtually all epic events take place at the beginning of the Kali Age. The other ages are only represented by the briefest of references to Gods and Heroes who were then active. Thus, the Kali Age is really the only age which possess immediacy in the epic tradition. Within the Kali Age, however, time appears to be twofold. It is separated into the time of the epic (time past, 'historical', 'heroic', 'that') and the present (time after the battle of Kārempūḍi, or now, 'this'). Epic time includes all the events that are sung in the epic. The present includes contemporary experience and secondary stories associated with but not included in the epic as it is sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*. The events of the epic culminate in the battle of Kārempūḍi. Events after the epic are structured by the resolution which takes place in that same battle. In view of its position at the boundary between the two principal divisions of time, the great Battle of Kārempūḍi may be regarded as the temporal centre of the epic tradition.

Among the beings who occupy this epic dimension of space-time are the following: Gods and other beings from Indian mythology, local Gods and characters from local mythology, Heroes, mankind of various castes, spirits of various kinds; and animals, both earthly and celestial. Some beings may fit into more than one category. The Heroes, for example, are both men and Gods. But however they are classified, the central figures of the epic are the Heroes of Palnāḍu. It is in relation to these Heroes that the other beings must be understood. As the chief actors in epic time-space, the Heroes are, in many respects, superior to the Gods. They alone function in all three worlds.

The spatial structure of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is not distinct from the one with which the epic audience is familiar. The inhabitants of that space are also, for the most part, familiar to the people who listen to the epic. Only the temporal dimension is somewhat removed. The epic time is in the past, but it is not in an inaccessible past. Each year there is a festival at which the epic is sung; major events are re-enacted, and the continuing lives of the characters are ritually reaffirmed. The vitality of the epic is attested to by the immediacy of the time-space and of the beings in it. It is largely the technique of oral transmission that sustains a living, changing epic world, a world which has not been statically confined to the printed page. Another way of expressing this living quality is to say that, through its renditions, the epic functions in a way that enables it both to participate in and to formulate the world in which it exists. *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is the oral literary expression of a local world-view. It integrates that world-view in the milieu from which it has developed with the milieu in which it continues to develop.

As he surveys the Kārempūḍi battlefield, Bālacandruḍu asks his companion, Velamala Doranna, to assess the strength of the army which Nāyakurālu has assembled. Doranna describes the area which this army covers: it extends from Guttikoṇḍa-Jānapāḍu in the east to the banks of the Candravanka at Mācerla in the west, and from Nalagoṇḍa and the Nāgulēru (near Kārempūḍi) in the south to Pondugula-Vāḍapalli (on the banks of the Kriṣṇa River) in the north.[2] The army fills the entire Palnāḍu as Gāleyya knows it. Not included, but implicit in this description, is a stretch of land—largest thorny, rocky wasteland and poor grazing land—that lies west of Mācerla towards Nāgārjunasāgar on the Kriṣṇa River (see Map 3). This Palnāḍu corresponds to the contemporary administrative division known as Palnāḍu Tāluk. It is also the area that is now known as the homeland of the Heroes. Within these boundaries are the capitals of the rival factions based in Gurajāla and Mācerla. Here, also is the battlefield on the Kārempūḍi plain. Here lie the rivers Nāgulēru and Candravanka, and the many villages that are under the jurisdiction of the rival Heroes. Most of the epic action takes place within this area. It is the issue of control over this Palnāḍu that is contested throughout the epic.

Beyond the boundaries of the inhabited epic Palnāḍu there is a wilderness of varying depths. Contemporary inhabited Palnāḍu is also bordered, more or less, on all sides by inhospitable areas designated as forest preserve. Today these are used primarily for grazing and for illicit cutting of firewood. In the epic, the wilderness beyond Palnāḍu is a place of exile. It is a place where Brahma Nāyuḍu is forced to live after losing the cock fight. His life there is depicted as one of privation. The immediate tasks are those of building a civilized home with tanks and fields.[3] The wilderness is also the scene of dark and secret doings. Pēr Nīḍu and Kannama meet in the wilderness as the latter makes his way through the darkness to cast the ill-starred Bāluḍu into the sea.[4] The wilderness has, until the advent of modern roads, always been a difficult and dangerous area in which to travel. Historically, it has been a no man's land between centres of civilization.

The political geography within Palnāḍu (excepting its forms of government) is very similar to the epic geography, including the dimensions and the significance of the boundary wilderness. The political geography outside Palnāḍu, however, is radically different. The difference is one of time. The political geography of the epic has remained static; it is fixed in the last half of the twelfth century A D. On the local level, contemporary centres of power are still Mācerla, Gurajāla, and their respective surrounding villages. Regional and

peninsular politics, however, bear little resemblance to those of the epic version or to the historical twelfth century.

Gāleyya's version of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* mentions marriage alliances between the Rājus of Palnāḍu and the rulers of two influential areas: the Cālukyas and Kālacuris of Kalyāṇ and the Durjayas of Velanāḍu; the last were, in fact, the real power of the Cālukya-Cōḷas in coastal Andhra.[5] Although the power of Kalyāṇ was slipping in the mid-twelfth century, it had dominated the western and central Deccan for centuries. 'The Story of the Deaf-Mute Rāju' and 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi' are set in Dēvagiri, Kalyāṇ, and an as yet unidentified fort in the central Deccan. Memory of the splendour of Kalyāṇ may be found in Gāleyya's description of the city: it outstrips the grandeur of Mācerla, Gurajāla, or any other city in the epic.[6] Similarly, the importance of Candavōlu is recalled in 'The Story of Candavōlu' and is referred to in 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu'.

Closer to home in the epic Palnāḍu are other neighbouring realms which actually existed in the twelfth century. Dharaṇikōṭa, near Amarāvati in present-day Guntur District, was the capital of the Kōṭas, feudatories of the Durjayas of Velanāḍu. The Kōṭas flourished 1100–1270.[7] The epic includes two important battles between the Heroes of Palnāḍu and warriors of Dharaṇikōṭa. The first battle occurs during the pilgrimage to the south. The second takes place after the Heroes are well established in Mācerla.[8] Today Dharaṇikōṭa is an unimportant village near Amarāvati. Amarāvati has also lost most of its former glory. Pānugallu, now a village on the outskirts of municipal Nalgoṇḍa, the central town of Nalgoṇḍa District, was an important centre of power under several dynasties before and during the twelfth century. That importance is reflected in the story of 'The Cock Fight'.[9] Kocerlakōṭa, Tripurāntakam, Mēḍapi, and many more principalities of the twelfth century have since lost their regional importance, but they fill out the political geography of the epic.

Unmentioned in the epic are neighbouring areas and places in Palnāḍu that were subsequently important under the Kākatiyas of Warangal (thirteenth century), the Reḍḍis of Koṇḍavīḍu (fourteenth century), the dynasties of Vijayanagar, and others which ruled between the twelfth century and the present. Although none of the important regional political centres of the twelfth century have retained their importance, the epic clearly preserves some basic outlines of twelfth-century political geography. The traditional historical geography in Palnāḍu is thus essentially that of the twelfth century; it does not resemble any previous or any subsequent time. As the results of archaeological surveys and historical research now filter down to the

villages of Palnāḍu, the rural populace is becoming more aware of other periods. This tendency does not, however, confuse periods; it serves, rather to distinguish them. It leaves the twelfth-century epic boundaries relatively intact.

The political geography of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* centres on Palnāḍu. It does this not so much by distorting the relative importance of Palnāḍu as by focusing attention on other areas only in so far as they are important to Palnāḍu. Alugu Rāju marries the daughter of Gonka Rāju of Velanāḍu, and thereby Velanāḍu is drawn into the epic.[10] The Kālacuri princes go into exile with Brahma Nāyuḍu of Palnāḍu and Kalyāṇ becomes more important.[11] Other smaller principalities are drawn in when they are defeated by the Heroes.

In Palnāḍu itself two political and administrative centres are important: Gurajāla and Mācerla. The epic's point of political resolution, however, lies in neither of these. Between them on neutral ground, is Kārempūḍi. This is the spot where the two antagonistic forces meet. It is there that they resolve their differences in the great Battle of Palnāḍu. In this sense, and in so far as all events in the epic lead up to the final battle, Kārempūḍi is the geopolitical centre of the epic. It is also the dramatic centre of activity. The Kārempūḍi battlefield and the battle which takes place there are at the centre of heroic space-time: the centre of the three worlds and the centre of time, dividing what is past from what is present.

In addition to its political organization of space, the epic possesses a well-defined religious geography. While political geography is limited to a specific political order, religious geography is less firmly time-bound. Political developments may influence the relative importance of religious landmarks, and they may even add new ones or eliminate old ones. Religious space, however, tends to have an existence of its own which is not totally dominated by the vicissitudes of politics. Although political geography in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is that of the twelfth century, the epic's religious geography is not so restricted. Athough there is no evidence that major religious features of the epic world are incongruent with the twelfth century, they are also compatible with the religious geography of today. Viewed from either the twelfth- or the twentieth-century perspective, the religious geography of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is selective; it is determined by considerations other than time.

The Epic of Palnāḍu's religious geography can perhaps be appreciated best from its political centre, Kārempūḍi. In Kārempūḍi is the Temple of the Heroes; there, also, are its associated shrines on the epic battlefield. The temple links the political and the religious space of the

epic. The Heroes are men who were active in the politics of the heroic period. They have since been deified, and they are worshipped today. The Temple of the Heroes marks the spot where the transformation might be said to have taken place. As deities the Heroes are worshipped in the form of Śiva *lingas*. Sixty-six stone *lingas* are housed in the *garbhamu* of the Temple of the Heroes.[12] There is also a Śiva temple across the Nāgulēru in Kārempūḍi. It is less important, however, than the nearby temple of Cennakēśvara, the patron God of Brahma Nāyuḍu and of the Heroes. Cennakēśvara is the God who, in the epic, accompanies the people of Palnāḍu to the South.[13] Although Cennakēśvara has a consort, Lakṣmi Dēvi, she is seldom mentioned. The important female deity of the epic is Ankālamma. Her temple is, perhaps, the most important in Kārempūḍi; she is the most important deity. Ankālamma also has a special story explaining her origin. This story, which is an integral part of the epic, tells how she came to Palnāḍu.

In addition to Kārempūḍi's principal temples of Śiva (represented by the Heroes), Viṣṇu (Cennakēśvara), and the Goddess (Ankālamma), several smaller shrines, in and around the compound of the Temple of the Heroes, honour lesser deities. Some of these are of considerable importance, both in the epic and in Palnāḍu today. Most important of these lesser deities, in the epic, is Pōta Rāju. A guardian deity of the Telugu country, Pōta Rāju is represented by a stone slab under the main roof of the Temple of the Heroes. An explanation of why Pōta Rāju receives animal sacrifices, and an account of how he came to Palnāḍu, are given in 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi'.[14] Ganga is represented by an idol on the banks of the Nāgulēru. Poleramma, a boundary Goddess, stands before the entrance to the temple compound. Ganga is worshipped on festival days with sacrifices of fowl. Poleramma must always be worshipped before one worships any other deities of the pantheon. Brahma Nāyuḍu has a tower (*mandapam*) in his honour (see Plate 5). He and the other Heroes are also represented by weapons. These are housed in the various temples of Kārempūḍi.

All the deities of *naralōka* who play a significant role in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* are present in Kārempūḍi. Cennakēśvara is always called Cennakēśvara of Mācerla, or of other places particularly associated with Viṣṇu: Kāncī, Ayodhya, and others. In the epic, as in contemporary Palnāḍu, Cennakēśvara is primarily associated with Mācerla. That city is the site of his most important Palnāḍu shrine. Likewise Śiva is worshipped in the form of a regional manifestation, Malikārjuna of Śrīśailam, (Parvatam, Śrīgīri). The Kārempūḍi shrines of Śiva and

Viṣṇu must be regarded as subsidiary to the principal shrines of these deities, which are situated elsewhere. The opposite is the case with the Heroes and Ankālamma: devotees come from distant places to visit the Temple of the Heroes in Kārempūḍi; everyone accepts this shrine as the original shrine of the Heroes. Although Ankālamma is known throughout the Telugu country, her shrine in Kārempūḍi is the great shrine in Palnāḍu. Likewise, Pōta Raju, though present in some form in most villages, is treated both in the epic and in Kārempūḍi as a local deity. He is not a manifestation of a deity who is better worshipped elsewhere.

Although most towns and villages in Palnāḍu have temples of Viṣṇu and Śiva, the epic pantheon is found as a unit only in Kārempūḍi. Nowhere else are Ankālamma, Heroes, Cennakēśvara, Śiva, and Pōta Rāju found as the major deities. Mācerla, Brahma Nāyuḍu's capital, has Cennakēśvara and Śiva. It also formerly had a temple of the Heroes.[15] But there is no temple to Ankālamma. Neither is there any noteworthy shrine to any other Goddess, except as a consort to Viṣṇu. Gurajāla has a Śiva temple (Istakāmēśvari) and a Viṣṇu temple (Rāma), but it has no temple to the Heroes and no Cennakēśvara temple. A small Ankālamma temple is relatively unimportant; the principal Goddess of Gurajāla is Pathapatamma.[16]

From the above it is clear that the religious geography of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is based upon the Gods who dwell in Kārempūḍi. It is not necessarily concerned with those Gods who are worshipped in Palnāḍu as a whole. The temples in Kārempūḍi are those of the prominent epic deities. The same cannot be said for any other village in the Telugu country. We may thus justifiably regard Kārempūḍi as the religio-geographic centre of the epic. We may then begin to look at the rest of the religious geography of the epic from the vantage point of Kārempūḍi.

This assessment of Kārempūḍi's centrality is supported by a *cāṭu* verse which is found in both written and oral versions.

> Heroes are Śiva Lingas; Viṣṇu is Cennuḍu;
> Pōta Rāju is Bhairava;[17] Ankama Śakti is Annapūrna;
> Gēreḍi Gangadhāra pool is Maṇikarṇika;[18]
> Is not Kārempūḍi Kāśi to the people of Palnāḍu?[19]

The verse is a series of equations drawn between Gods and holy places known all over India and Gods (and Heroes) known in Palnāḍu. It juxtaposes two levels of mytho-religious reality. The one level represents a pan-Indian world-view; the other, though true only in a restricted geographical setting, serves as a sufficient world-view within

its own sphere. But the standpoint of the verse, unlike that of the epic, is readily seen as being of the 'Hindu' rather than the local perspective (whether or not the person who created the verse was a resident of Palnāḍu is not particularly important). The verse implies that the local scheme follows a pan-Indian pattern. Furthermore, it suggest that there exists a one-to-one correspondence between what have been called the 'great' and the 'small' traditions. This is the point of view of Brāhmaṇism as an all-India focus of religious organization; it is not the point of view of the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* or the Hero Cult. It is a view which has profited by absorbing all local deities into the Hindu pantheon as manifestations of established pan-Indian deities. Aslo implicit in the verse is an assumption that local mytho-religious reality is simply a restatement of pan-Indian mythology; that Palnāḍu religio-mythological and social organization is the same but simply expressed in more locally specific terms. As we shall see, this is not the case.

The verse gives justification for the importance of Kārempūḍi in a local scheme. It does so by comparing Kārempūḍi to the holiest of pan-Indian cities. Nevertheless, it is misleading to suggest, as the verse does, that the same relationship exists, down the line, between mytho-religious reality viewed from Kārempūḍi and that viewed from Kāśi. Different centres perceive geographical features differently. This holds true whether the geography be topographical, political, or religious. As sung by Gāleyya, *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has the same central religio-geographical features as the village of Kārempūḍi. From this we may infer that religious geography outside Kārempūḍi, as depicted in the epic, represents one possible map of deities as seen from that vantage point. Mācerla is seen as the centre of the Cennakēśvara cult; Śrīśailam as the centre of the Mallikārjuna cult. But there are, in addition to these, and in addition to other deities centred on Kārempūḍi, other holy places that are of considerable interest to the people of Kārempūḍi.

Still on the level of *naralōka* and excluding, for the time being, *dēvalōka* and *nāgalōka*, Alugu Rāju's pilgrimage, which ends with the establishment of Mācerla, provides an outline of some places which are considered to be of religious importance from the vantage point of the epic and Kārempūḍi. Gāleyya gives a list of sacred rivers and suggests that they flow to the north of Palnāḍu. With the exception of the Tunghabadra which is to the west, the rivers are to the north. The list shows, however, that the holy rivers, though of some importance, are not known to the singer either geographically or for their significance. The same is true of the Heroes' homeland: it is described in terms of several mytho-religious places, but the spatial and religious

significance of these is apparently not fully appreciated by Gāleyya.[20] Pālamācāpuri, the homeland, is believed to have been Cēdī in present-day Madhya Pradesh.[21] Gāleyya, however, only knows it by name and a vague northerly direction from Palnāḍu. Though the places mentioned are important for their sound value—as impressive-sounding names—they have no precise geographic reality for the singer.

The first stop on the Heroes' pilgrimage is Gaya. It is a place particularly suitable for making offerings to manes of deceased ancestors.[22] The last stop is in Mācerla, where Cennayya chooses to remain. Between these two points the Heroes visit several of the major pilgrimage centres of Andhra Pradesh and of South India. To placate Gai Durga of Gaya, in North India, one of the Heroes has to take the help of Kanaka Durga of Bejvāḍa. Kanaka Durga is, today, one of the great Goddesses of coastal Andhra. From Gaya the Heroes proceed to Amarāvati where they worship Amarlingasvāmi. The next important stop on their pilgrimage is Śrīśailam. There they are disappointed in their hope of being freed of past sins. Although other recognized places of pilgrimage are mentioned, they are not significant for the epic. Tīrupati, Śrīrangam, Kānci, Kālahasti, Upper Ahōbalam, and Mahānandi are all contemporary places of pilgrimage for residents of Palnāḍu. They have more regional and all-India importance than any place in Palnāḍu. But none of them rivals Kārempūḍi as the focus of religious interest in the epic.[23]

We have noted that Kārempūḍi is both the political and the religious centre of *The Epic of Palnāḍu*; we have not yet, however, investigated the relationship between the two centres. The epic's political world is the world of the twelfth century. The religious world is timeless. All the Gods and pilgrimage places are contemporary, but they are also at home in the epic setting.

There are, however, differences between the Gods in the epic and the Gods known to the people of Palnāḍu today. One important difference is their degree of mobility. Today, Cennayya resides in Mācerla, Ankālamma is fixed in Kārempūḍi, and the Heroes are confined to shrines. As contemporary deities, they are rooted in specific spots. In the epic their movement is not curtailed. Ankālamma is born and goes to Kalyāṇ where she sets up residence; she is then stolen and taken away to Śivanandi Fort; eventually she finds her way to Kārempūḍi in Palnāḍu.[24] Pōta Rāju begins as guardian of a fort; later, by Brahma Nāyuḍu's decree, he is established in every village of the Telugu country, and particularly in Kārempūḍi.[25] Cennayya comes from the North and then refuses to budge from Mācerla.[26] Brahma Nāyuḍu and the Heroes end life as men and then enter the timeless

world of Guṭṭikoṇḍa Cave and the Temple of the Heroes.[27] In the course of the epic, all the Gods and Heroes are established in their present-day homes. In short, the epic is the context in which the contemporary religious order is established.

The epic centres religious and political geography in Palnāḍu and, more specifically, in Kārempūḍi. As a creative process, operating through the singers, the epic, if viewed from Kārempūḍi, brings religious and political geography into clear focus. From any other vantage point the underlying order is not as clearly evident. Politically, the latter part of the twelfth century was a chaotic period in the Deccan. *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has ordered this chaos by depicting a local battlefield where conflicts and tensions are seen to be laid to rest. Similarly, the epic begins with mobile deities and ends with stationary deities. The jumble of Gods, which is a common feature of rural Andhra, is brought into a harmonious scheme in which individual interactions may be appreciated. They may be appreciated if they are viewed from Kārempūḍi, the focal point. There, political and religious disharmony is quelled. Everything fits into its proper and, apparently, immutable place. The word 'apparently' should be emphasized: the epic not only has the power to focus, it also has the capacity continuously to make adjustments in order to keep the focus clear. This continuous adjustment and readjustment is an essential feature of the epic process.

The epic establishes order in the physical world of Palnāḍu through two principal means. First, the epic credits elements of Palnāḍu material culture to the activities of the Heroes. Among these are icons of the Gods in Kārempūḍi, the cities of Mācerla and Gurajāla, several temples, and various public works. Second, the epic mentions other natural and man-made features in stories of the life and times of the Heroes. Examples include rivers in which the Heroes bathe, temples where they do *pūja*, villages through which they pass, and trees under which they meet. Corresponding categories exist in more abstract spheres of culture. Certain customs and social structures are directly established in the epic by the Heroes; others are confirmed by epic characters' participation in them.

Many physical features which are attributed to the Heroes are involved with the foundation of society. In addition to Mācerla and Gurajāla, several other towns and villages in the epic are built by the Heroes. When forced into exile, Brahma Nāyuḍu builds Maṇḍādi. Later, when Nāyakurālu does not allow him to live in peace in Maṇḍādi, he founds Mēḍapi. Villages surrounding these towns are built by other Heroes.[28] Temples and tanks are standard features of Telugu

society. In the epic, Brahma Nāyuḍu builds the Cennakēśvara temple in Mācerla;[29] Nāyakurālu has been credited with a Śiva temple near Gāmālapāḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu and Nāyakurālu also build tanks near their respective capitals. In addition to these and other pioneering works, various noteworthy features of the landscape are attributed to the Heroes. Among them are two large cairns which are said to have been thrown up at the time of the cock fight.[30]

The epic, as Gāleyya sings it, credits the origin of many geographic features to the Heroes. But associations do not end there: local tradition credits the Heroes with far more than the epic itself does. An enquiry about a rock inscription will often be answered by the assertion that it was done by Brahma Nāyuḍu or at 'that time', i.e. the time of the Heroes. When a town, a rock in a field, or a canyon is associated with the Heroes, it gains a dimension; it becomes part of the local heroic age when the contemporary Palnāḍu world was established. Certain recognition comes with being called a work of the Heroes. Yet to be a part of the heroic age, a place or thing need not have been created by the Heroes. Once the Heroes are shown to be responsible for the main villages, temples, tanks and deities, lesser landmarks have only to be mentioned in the epic in order to be firmly established in the heroic age. Villages, temples, sacred trees, caves, rivers, valleys, roads, fords, crops, animals, and fields receive their epic validation through their association with the period.

The epic interprets its material from a particular point of view. It constructs a unique world-view out of diverse elements. A prominent geographical feature, such as Guṭṭikoṇḍa Cave, may engender stories connecting it with several traditions. In *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, Brahma Nāyuḍu is fated to enter Guṭṭikoṇḍa Cave after the battle of Kārempūḍi. This establishes the cave's place in the epic world-view. In this world-view the other associations are interesting and not denied; they are simply irrelevant. Another example is Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, the Buddhist site on the western border of Palnāḍu. A top, given to Brahma Nāyuḍu by the Serpent Maidens during his sojourn in Nāgalōka, leaps up when he is playing with it and comes to rest in a cave on Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.[31] The top is eventually retrieved by Brahma Nāyuḍu's son, Bāluḍu.[32] Though the site has a long and complex history, Gāleyya showed interest in just one thing about Nāgārjunakoṇḍa: never having been there, he wanted to see the cave that he sings about in the epic.[33] Less widely known places similarly have their identity established in the epic. Nalagoṇḍa, a hill south of Kārempūḍi, is the spot from which Bāluḍu jumps his steed on to the Kārempūḍi battlefield. And—another example of landmarks made by the

Heroes—holes in the rock street of Kārempūḍi are said to be marks left by the hooves of this steed when it landed.[34]

Gangavaram, the village which borders Gurajāla on the north, is called Kaṭṭubōttu, or 'Magicians', Gangavaram; thus recalling the magicians in the epic whom Nāyakurālu summons to carry out her schemes at the cock fight.[35] Similarly, at Cerlagūḍipāḍu, famous as the place where Ala Rācamallu was poisoned, a carved stone in a field is interpreted as marking the spot where he fell.[36] Some places are important in the epic; others are merely mentioned as the Heroes pass through. But even when they are of little apparent importance, their inclusion in a rendition of the epic gives them a place in the epic world. The singer has considerable freedom to choose which of these auxiliary landmarks to include or ignore. Singers exercise their options according to their own view of the world.

In a specific instance, the epic may purport to record the founding activities of the Heroes, or it may simply record their activities in a familiar landscape. The two processes yield a similar result. By extension, any place mentioned in the epic is included in the ordering process. Once a framework is established to account for the central features of the society, the less important features are brought into line. The whole becomes a normative map which structures the world when superimposed upon the local landscape.

Dominant features of political, religious, and cultural geography have drawn lesser features into line behind them. A corresponding process functions among the inhabitants of the epic world as they sort themselves out. The central individual of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is Brahma Nāyuḍu. His caste is Velama. This is the central caste. The area of Brahma Nāyuḍu's individual dominance and of the Velama's caste dominance is not restricted to any particular level of life; neither is it restricted to particular types of rational beings. Furthermore, their fields of activity are not limited to certain territorial boundaries either within *naralōka* or within the three worlds. Brahma Nāyuḍu and his brothers are active in all three worlds, the worlds of serpents, men, and Gods, but on no level is Brahma Nāyuḍu, or any of the others, all powerful. On each and every level of interaction with fellow rational beings, the Velamas function within certain limitations. Nevertheless, both quantitatively—most of the stories are about them—and qualitatively—they are the central figures—the social and religious world of the epic focuses on and through the Velama caste and its great Heroes. In particular it focuses on Brahma Nāyuḍu, his brothers, and his son, Bāluḍu. Velama women are similarly at the centre of the feminine world.

If the central individuals in this epic are Velamas, what is the composition of the rest of the epic society? Indian society has most often been regarded as extremely hierarchical. Sanskrit tradition favours such an approach. Modern interpretations of Indian society, as ranging from Brāhmaṇ to untouchable, have also suggested a well-defined social continuum. A hierarchy presupposes distinguishing characteristics for the different classifications and accepted criteria for ranking them. The distinguishing characteristics of hierarchy, according to one system, are considered in the following:

> The organization of South Asian society is premised on the ancient and continuing cultural assumptions that all living beings are differentiated into genre, or classes, each of which is thought to possess a defining coded substance. . . .
>
> Every human genus (and therefore every caste) is thought to have as the shared corporate property of its members a particular substance (e.g., *śārira*, 'body', *rakta*, 'blood') embodying its code for conduct (*dharma*). Each caste's inborn code enjoins it to maintain its substance and morality, its particular occupation, and its correct exchanges with other castes. Indian thought does not separate 'nature' and 'morality' or 'law' so that castes are, in Western terms, at once 'natural' and 'moral' units of society. These units make up a single order, one that is profoundly particularized.

Given the genre or classes that are so characterized,

> Each caste is thought to maintain or alter its moral standing (that is, its rank with respect to other castes), its hereditary substance, and its natural code according to the way that it receives or refuses to receive bodily substances, consumes or refuses to consume food, and gives or refuses to give services in exchanges with particular other castes.[37]

Within these kinds of assumptions, there has long existed in India (since Vedic times) a hierarchical scheme. Under this scheme, all beings, from the Gods to the most lowly, have been ranked in relation to each other. On the plane of mankind, this scheme has placed Brāhmaṇs first and (in its later development) untouchables last. According to two prominent anthropologists, this particular scheme has served as an effective 'template for generating systematic conceptions of the local, everchanging castes (*jātis*) and their exchanges in the closely connected scheme of Hindu image worship, called *pūjā* (literally, respect)'.[38]

A hierarchy based on the above-mentioned system (of exchanges) is not now, nor has it ever been, the only viable means of ranking castes and individuals in South Asia. Economic status, political power, military might, level of consciousness, and other orders, have always

refuted, subverted, and effectively contradicted the Vedic scheme. Such factors continue to be operational today. On the level of actual society, the mutual interactions of various value systems are extremely complex and not easily disentangled. In India, as perhaps elsewhere, the extremes of a hierarchical scale tend to be the most clearly established. They fix the scale. Between the extremes, and especially towards the middle, distinctions often become fuzzy; an active give-and-take occurs. This makes the scale constantly adjust to new circumstances. In many areas within South Asia, the dominant castes lie somewhere in the middle of the Brāhmaṇical view of caste hierarchy. Though the hierarchy remains, its significance in practice may diminish to the point of irrelevance. Although distinctions remain, and although they may continue to be attended to, other organizational criteria may be more suitable for our understanding. Such is the situation in contemporary Andhra Pradesh. In many rural areas of the Telugu country the economically and socially dominant castes are the 'clean' or '*Sat*' Śūdras.

The Epic of Palnāḍu does not set out to construct a new or non-Brāhmaṇical hierarchic model of society. When referring to the populace as a whole, Gāleyya frequently says, 'Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras, all'. Implicit is a tacit acceptance of the fourfold division of society associated with Brāhmaṇism. Excluded are important segments of the society, particularly the Māla and Mādiga untouchables. This way of dividing society does not have much place in everyday usage. All castes commonly go by their local names with no mention of a fourfold structure. Gāleyya's use of the phrase 'Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras, all' need be taken no more literally than reference to the army as being composed of the *caturangabalam*. (The Sanskrit term means 'infantry, cavalry, elephants, and war chariots'.) Chariots went out of use centuries before the Palnāḍu epic period. Nowhere are they mentioned in oral or written versions of the epic. As with the army, the practical organization of society differs considerably from what the classical formulas would seem to suggest.

The social structure presented in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is better understood when viewed as concentric rather than hierarchical. The dominant Velama caste is at the centre of society. More importantly, the Heroes of this caste also occupy the centre of the whole range of beings. This centre is not just a mid-point in a hierarchy: it is the focal point which orders the entire picture. The castre structure is not a hierarchical one organized from the extremes; it is made up of discrete groups which are focused on the group that occupies the centre. The

epic focuses on and through the Velama caste heroes and their values. It follows a pattern which corresponds to Kārempūḍi as the geographical focal point and the battle near the end of the twelfth century as the temporal centre point.

The centrality of the Velamas and particularly of Brahma Nāyuḍu may be illustrated by reference to a number of one-to-one interactions between Velama Heroes or Heroines and other individuals, both human and non-human. The setting of the interactions is a world in which the boundaries are less firmly fixed, more fluid, than they are generally conceived as being in Palnāḍu today. In each interaction, however, the outcome tends to approximate the contemporary Palnāḍu realities of politics, caste interactions, religion, man–woman relations, and so forth. This holds true even when pan-Indian cultural values are contradictory. Even when the epic interactions are more idealized than real, they tend to support local standards rather than more abstract schemes such as those of the Brāhmaṇs.

Many interactions have a mythic quality about them. Many others set precedents. On levels of the epic which we have been discussing, once a framework is established, lesser events are drawn into it. On the same patterns, other beings come to occupy their appropriate places in the epic framework. This socio-religious ordering that takes place is focused through the Heroes.

In *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, as in Palnāḍu and in all of India, society is differentiated by caste. The interaction of persons belonging to different castes provides the first evidence of Velama centrality—of how the epic structures the three worlds of sentient beings. Each episode of the epic focuses on specific individual Heroes and Heroines, not on castes or other groups. The centrality of the Velama Heroes is observed in a composite of relations between individual Velamas and other human beings. In the majority of the episodes, the central figure is a Velama Hero. The Velama position, however, is brought out in these Heroes' interactions with people of other castes.

Velama–Rāju relations are most clearly dramatized in stories involving Peddanna, Brahma Nāyuḍu's elder brother. Peddanna challenges Rāju superiority in 'The Story of Peddanna' and again in an episode of 'The Mission to Gurajāla' which tells the story of his quarrel with Ala Rācamallu. In *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, the term 'Rāju' may roughly be equated with the Sanskrit term 'Kṣatriya' which refers to the princely cast. Rājus in the epic trace their lineages through *purāṇic* genealogies to the solar or lunar Kṣatriya races. On the other hand, Velamas do not claim to be more than Śūdras. They trace their ancestry through the Rājus whom they serve as ministers.[39] Velama

subservience, however, is often nominal. Events suggest a different kind of relationship.[40]

As a character, Peddanna is well suited to help delineate the poorly defined boundaries of Velama–Rāju interaction. Born of Velama parents, Peddanna is adopted in infancy by a Rāju couple. His adoptive father is the man whom his father serves as minister. On his adoption, the boy gains the name Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. He is thereafter raised as a Rāju. When he grows up, he goes outside his immediate locality and there wins a Rāju bride. He does so by besting the Rājus of the world in contests of strength and skill. When his actual Velama parentage is revealed, Peddanna's in-laws try to destroy him. Nevertheless, he defeats then single-handed and escapes with his bride to his home city. As an adoptee, his status is ambiguous. There is, however, no question about his superiority with arms.[41]

In his other great confrontation, Peddanna, as a Velama, directly challenges a Rāju, Ala Rācamallu, the exiled scion of Kalyāṇ. The results are ambiguous. Brahma Nāyuḍu intervenes between the two battling Heroes. By this intervention, however, Brahma Nāyuḍu is forced to contrive a decisive solution to the question of whether a foreign Rāju should be considered superior to a domestic Velama.[42] The question is settled when Ala Rācamallu is treacherously slain.[43] Brahma Nāyuḍu sets up the young man's death. He does so because Ala Rācamallu has, before the assembled people of Mācerla, openly challenged both himself and Peddanna. Brahma Nāyuḍu's son, Bāluḍu, also defeats two Rājus. He respectfully offers one of them as a sacrifice before he steps on to the Kārempūdi battlefield.[44] He worships the head of the other at the conclusion of the final battle.

Throughout the epic, Brahma Nāyuḍu remains nominally subservient to the Mācerla Rājus, but his apparent subservience is contradicted on two important levels. After the division of Palnāḍu, control of Gurajāla is jointly exercised by Reḍḍis and Rājus. But in Mācerla the local Rājus of Palnāḍu virtually never exert their authority. The only challenge to Velama supremacy is a foreign one. That challenge, as has just been shown, is effectively neutralized. The other level on which Velama superiority reveals itself is in Brahma Nāyuḍu's personal charisma. When Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu prepares to retire as Alugu Rāju's minister, he instructs Brahma Nāyuḍu to go and prostrate himself before his lord. Brahma Nāyuḍu warns his father that no one is capable of receiving his obeisance, but the warning goes unheeded. When Brahma Nāyuḍu bows, the Rāju is mortally stricken with a carbuncle. Brahma Nāyuḍu does not establish his authority by directly challenging the Rāju; instead, he proves it by bowing down. His is an

innate personal superiority. On his deathbed, Alugu Rāju then asks Brahma Nāyuḍu to take charge of the young princes as if they were his own sons. This legitimizes Brahma Nāyuḍu's subsequent influence in Palnāḍu.[45]

Peddanna and Brahma Nāyuḍu, as examples, suggest the slightly less than complete extension of a Velama role into the area of sovereignty. Peddanna's adoption by Rājus gives the Rāju and Velama castes a certain equality. His strength, cunning, and charisma justify that equality. But it is not only with Rājus that Velamas are forced to compete for a central position; nor is it only by males that primacy is contested. In the story of 'The Cock Fight', Brahma Nāyuḍu has strong allies of the Golla caste. Their allegiance, however, is not something he can take for granted. The Gollas demand a position approximately on a par with Velamas. They force Brahma Nāyuḍu to acknowledge their ascendancy in certain areas. Meanwhile, they acknowledge their own subservience in others.

Before the cock fight, Ravēlapatār, a Golla, first asserts his right to bring the chosen cock from Pānugallu. He dies of wounds incurred on the mission. His elder brother then claims the cock. The claim is validated by the Gods. The mother of the Golla Heroes also challenges a Velama, Śīlamma, before the temple of Cennakēśvara in Mācerla. Gāleyya treats the Gollas ambiguously. On one hand they are somewhat crazy (as they are depicted in folklore). On the other hand they are called Yādava Rājas. This connects them with Kriṣṇa and the Kṣatriyas. One of the Heroes of 'The Cock Fight', Ravēlapatār, speaks proudly of his people who were Gollas (or Yādavas) throughout the ages. He contrasts their positions with that of Brahma Nāyuḍu who became an avatar of Kriṣṇa in the Kali Age and thus a Golla.[46]

Velamas establish their relationship with the Palnāḍu Rājus and the Kāncerla Rājus by means of adoption, intermarriage, force of arms, and charisma. But they work out a partnership with the Gollas and the Rājus of Kalyāṇ. The alliance, however, proves unfortunate for the Gollas and the Rājus: they lose their lives. These interactions suggest a middle ground occupied by Velamas. They have to work out a relationship individually with the other castes. In each instance a Velama emerges with the upper hand.

An instance of direct ranking of the Velama caste with several other epic castes leaves that caste's position unambiguous, except in relation to Brāhmaṇs. The context of this ranking is the following: Brahma Nāyuḍu's wife, Aitamma, and her Velama sisters-in-law are granted a boon by Cennakēśvara. The boon is a fruit which promises them male issue. The sisters-in-law quickly devour their portions but they do not

conceive. Aitamma shares her portion with women of six castes. Among them is a Brāhmaṇ woman and also women of several artisan castes. Aitamma and the other women conceive and give birth. The boys grow up as brothers.[47] Bāluḍu always holds the top position among the brothers, but he is depicted as a leader among comrades, the eldest of siblings. In cases previously mentioned, Velamas had to challenge a nominally higher caste or to fend off a challenge from an equal or lower one. In this case, the boys of other castes are magnanimously taken in. Still, though brothers, they are not equal. Bāluḍu's mother has toy tops made for the boys. The tops are ranked, and the numbers assigned reveal the relative status of the boys. 'The Mangala boy's top is ranked 1,000; the Kummari's, 2,000; the Cākala's, 3,000; the Kansali's, 4,000; the Kammari's, 5,000; the Velama's, 6,000; the Brāhmaṇ's, 10,000. Bāluḍu, the son of Brahma Nāyuḍu, gets a top ranked 12,000.'[48] The point seems clear: though a Velama may generally rank behind a Brāhmaṇ, in the specific case of Bāluḍu and the other Heroes, Velamas are far above Brāhmaṇs. It is noteworthy that the relationship of these 'brothers' to Bāluḍu is famous in Palnāḍu. This is true despite their relatively minor role in the epic.

Though one of Bāluḍu's 'younger brothers' is a Brāhmaṇ boy, Anapōtu Rāju,[49] Brāhmaṇs generally play an attenuated role in the epic. They normally appear as astrologers. On certain occasions they appear as manifestations of Cennakēśvara. This happens when the God needs to communicate with the Heroes. In all such cases the emphasis is upon Cennakēśvara and not upon a Brāhmaṇ form. Whether as astrologer or God manifest, a Brāhmaṇ is always accorded a modicum of respect. But he may be treated most disrespectfully if the news he brings is not liked by the people.[50] Expiation of the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇ is the reason given for the initial pilgrimage to the South. Furthermore, repetition of the same offence prompts the people to settle in Mācerla.[51] Neither instance, however, appears to be regrettable. It is the play of fate and the acting-out of destiny.

Anapōtu Rāju, Bāluḍu's Brāhmaṇ 'brother', is a more complex character. He is also a popular Hero. The circumstances of his death are poignant. Gāleyya, the seasoned story-teller, had, more than once, to interrupt the story until he could control his own tears.[52] Anapōtu Rāju's actions are sometimes worthy of a great Hero; sometimes they are more questionable. Nevertheless, his positive traits arise out of his decision to align himself with the Velama caste and Bāluḍu. His negative traits are more closely associated with his Brāhmaṇ birth.

Anapōtu Rāju is personally responsible for the estrangement of Bālūḍu and his wife Māncāla. On one level the estrangement is

desirable: only as a virgin warrior (one who has not had sexual relations with his own wife) is Bāluḍu capable of playing out his destined role in Palnāḍu's destiny.[53] But Anapōtu's motives and methods are questionable. He encourages Bāluḍu to spend his time with a courtesan, Sabbai. Meanwhile, Anapōtu Rāju deceives Bāluḍu about his wife whom he has not seen since their childhood marriage. Again, the Brāhmaṇ boy remains seated beside Bāluḍu while the others respectfully rise when Māncāla enters. Consequently, Māncāla, not knowing which boy is her husband, washes the Brāhmaṇ's feet instead of her own husband's. As a Brāhmaṇ it is proper for Anapōtu Rāju to remain seated, but in doing so he intrudes further on the relationship between man and wife. At the same time, Māncāla gives the Brāhmaṇ his place of priority without having to acknowledge her intent to do so.[54]

Māncāla has her revenge: she succeeds in separating Anapōtu Rāju from Bāluḍu. By so doing, she prevents the Brāhmaṇ from entering the battlefield. Her self-admitted purpose is to come between the bosom brothers. Nevertheless, she also has a moral, though self-serving, justification for doing so. Māncāla informs Bāluḍu that they will be guilty of a Brāhmaṇ's death if Anapōtu dies on the battlefield.[55] Though reasonable in the abstract, in the mouth of a vengeful woman the argument is at best suspect. The result of Māncāla's intervention is Anapōtu Rāju's death. He does not die on the field of battle; he dies as a lone Hero, by sacrificing himself to Śiva. Anapōtu's death is heroic because he dies like a Velama and not like a Brāhmaṇ. Before he dies, he reproaches himself for ignoring the advice of his fellow caste members and associating with Śūdras. From the epic point of view, however, heroism is everything. Though he does not gain the ultimate glory of dying in battle, Anapōtu Rāju does make a good accounting of himself. Taken as a whole, the episode called 'The Death of Anapōtu Rāju' maintains a unique and high position for Brāhmaṇs. Nevertheless, it ultimately judges them by Velama or Śūdra standards.

Almost everything that Anapōtu Rāju does may be viewed on two levels, one positive and the other negative. As a Hero, he makes sure that his brother remains a virgin. As a Brāhmaṇ, he is a deceitful interloper. He dies as a lone Hero, but he fails to get to the battlefield. He is a traitor to his caste, but he sides with the right caste. He is a faithful friend to his brother, but he also leads him astray and ultimately abandons him. What his caste represents without the Velama connection is exemplified by the Brāhmaṇs who come to carry Anapōtu back to Mēdapi. At first these Brāhmaṇs refuse to polluṭe themselves with the boy's bloody corpse. When they are paid enough money, however, they carry him home and perform his funeral.[56]

A heroic code binds the Heroes together in a casteless brotherhood. Before setting out for battle, Bāluḍu lectures his mother, Aitamma, on the absence of caste distinctions in the heroic brotherhood. Ignoring Aitamma's protests, the boys all eat off the same plates.[57] The *Kṛṣṇabhirāmamu* mentions such inter-caste dining as one of the primary reasons for the epic confiict.[58] Several modern writers have also depicted Brahma Nāyuḍu as a great socio-religious reformer. They mention the inter-caste dining and Brahma Nāyuḍu's adoption of Kannama, a Māla, as his son and Vaiṣṇavite protégé.[59] The significance of these apparent subversions of caste distinctions must, however, be seen in the context of the entire tradition.

Kannama is a Hero, and Bāluḍu always calls him elder brother. But even in his most heroic episodes, Kannama acts as Brahma Nāyuḍu's servant. Respected and honoured, he is, nevertheless, assigned to tasks which correspond to his original Māla caste role: bodyguard, messenger, watchman, and performer of unpleasant tasks, such as the disposal of the unwanted baby, Bāluḍu. At one point Bāluḍu lands on Kannama's head. Though this is a great insult, he gets away with it because they are brothers.[60] Nothing derogatory, however, is ever said about this Māla or any other low-caste individual. There is a brotherhood among the men of the different castes. Nevertheless, the brotherhood is always organized around the leadership of Velama Heroes. In the mytho-heroic world which the epic castes occupy, the organization of castes is essentially non-hierarchical. The various castes do not jockey for position between two opposite poles. Instead, they organize themselves concentrically, as individual castes, in relation to the Velamas.

Thus far, we have considered the role of certain Velama Heroes among human inhabitants of *naralōka*, one of the three worlds. We now turn to a consideration of their position in relation to other classes of beings in the three worlds. During the course of the epic, three individuals from *naralōka* descend into *nāgalōka* and contact beings who dwell there. The three are Brahma Nāyuḍu; his brother, Pēr Nīḍu; and his mother, Śīlamma. Pēr Nīḍu volunteers to get a jasmine flower from *nāgalōka* for doing *pūja* to Gai Durga. In order to accomplish his task, he has the assistance of another Goddess, Kanaka Durga, sister of Gai Durga. Kanaka Durga is primarily a Goddess of *naralōka*. But she is privy to the entrance to *nāgalōka*. Though Pēr Nīḍu accepts the help of a Goddess in finding his way to *nāgalōka*, once there he relies upon his own strength to gain his objective. He defeats the Nine Siddhas and gains the flower.[61] He thus demonstrates the military superiority of a human, Velama hero, over inhabitants of the serpent world.

Brahma Nāyuḍu and his mother also enter *nāgalōka*, but their visit is made in very different circumstances. The outcome is also very different. Brahma Nāyuḍu does not challenge the denizens of *nāgalōka*; he goes there to seek shelter. Once there, he is protected, cherished, instructed, and finally adopted as one of them. At birth, Brahma Nāyuḍu's life is threatened by Nāyakurālu. She takes on the form of an evil midwife. This midwife dashes him against a tree—trees and caves are entrances to *nāgalōka*—and he enters the underworld. There, safe from Nāyakurālu's wiles, he is nurtured by the Nāgakanyakulu, or 'Serpent Maidens', and the Siddhas, or Brahmas. The primal serpent, Adiśēṣa, is his guru. Through his association with inhabitants of *nāgalōka*, Brahma Nāyuḍu transcends his simple humanity and receives a name commensurate with his position in both the worlds. 'He was born a Velama in the human world; he is one among the Nine Brahmas. His name should be Brahma Nāyuḍu, Brahma for being one of the Nine Brahmas and Nāyuḍu for being a Velama.' The Serpent Maidens also give him a special top which later plays a role in the epic. Śīlamma follows her new-born baby into *nāgalōka*. There she is warmly received and bathed by the Serpent Maidens, after she proves that she is indeed Brahma Nāyuḍu's mother.[62] The relationship between Brahma Nāyuḍu's people and the inhabitants of the serpent world parallels the Velama–Rāju relationship on the level of mankind. Peddanna, it will be remembered, also takes the name of his adopted parents. He becomes Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju—Peddanna for being a Velama and Bāḍa Rāju for being a Rāju.[63]

These Velama relations with chthonic beings are further evidence of the importance of serpent worship in Palnāḍu. It will be remembered that the first inscriptions to be associated with epic characters are inscribed on serpent pillars.[64] Every village in Palnāḍu has at least one stone carved in the likeness of a cobra. Anthills where serpents are worshipped are also common. Some villages have special stone enclosures where serpents dwell and where they receive offerings.

Bāluḍu also has connections with this serpent world. He retrieves from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa a serpent top which was given to Brahma Nāyuḍu by the Serpent Maidens. He gets it by promising it a human sacrifice when he later goes to war.[65] Again, to secure the right to begin the battle of Kārempūḍi, Bāluḍu has to overcome a poison-breathed serpent which has been created by his father, Brahma Nāyuḍu. Bāluḍu accomplishes his task by exploiting the natural antipathy of the kite and the serpent. He also draws on his people's special relationship with Viṣṇu. Following his wife's advice, Bāluḍu calls on Viṣnu's mount,

Garutmantuḍu. The bird distracts the serpent for long enough to allow Bāluḍu to accomplish his task.[66]

The inhabitants of *dēvalōka* have a comparable relationship with the Velama Heroes. Peddanna and others come into contact with the inhabitants of *dēvalōka*, but Brahma Nāyuḍu's excursion into the celestial realm best illustrates the relationship between *dēvalōka* and *naralōka*. Peddanna breaks in a celestial horse. On it he ascends to *dēvalōka*. Once there, he is reminded of his duties in *naralōka*. With the help of the Gods he returns to *naralōka*, saves his wife, and destroys his in-laws from the back of the celestial horse.[67] Peddanna is assisted by the Gods and he profits from their help, but he has no occasion to rank himself against them.

In edited manuscript editions of *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, Brahma Nāyuḍu is recognized as an avatar of Viṣṇu, but the equation receives little emphasis. In this, the edited manuscripts diverge from the living oral rendition. Here Brahma Nāyuḍu's status as an avatar is frequently reiterated. The avatar label does little, however, to clarify the nature of the relationship between Brahma Nāyuḍu and the Gods who dwell in *dēvalōka*. Even less does it suggest the complex of interactions between Brahma Nāyuḍu and the various inhabitants of the three worlds.

Cennakēśvarasvāmi, the patron God of the Heroes of Palnāḍu, is mentioned frequently by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*.[68] He is also often worshipped in episodes of the narrative. Furthermore, he occasionally intervenes in epic events. But, just like the Goddesses Ankālamma and Durga, Cennakēśvarasvāmi is active only in *naralōka*. He dwells as the icon in the Cennakēśvara temple in Mācerla. He never becomes actively involved either in *nāgalōka* or in *dēvalōka*. This is not to suggest that he is portrayed as lifeless stone: in the epic, he is a living being with feelings and desires of his own; he is also capable of making his needs known and of affecting the lives of men. Brahma Nāyuḍu and Bālacandruḍu are born of Cennayya's boon. It is he who decides that the people of Palnāḍu should establish Mācerla; and it is also he who refuses to leave that place, even when his devotees go into exile. Now and then Cennakēśvara comes in the guise of an aged Brāhmaṇ. This is to advise the Heroes on what course of action they should take.[69] He is the God of Mācerla and Palnāḍu, and his sphere of activity is *naralōka*, the world of men. Though nominally Ādi Viṣṇu, or 'Supreme Viṣṇu', he and his devotees are mutually dependent upon one another. When the Heroes are about to depart, fully armed, from Pālamācāpuri, Cennayya says, 'Wherever you go, there you will fight. You will die. What will be my lot? I refuse to come.'[70] He is dependent for his

sustenance upon these particular Heroes. No stories in the epic cycle connect him with the Viṣṇu of Hindu mythology; only the name establishes the identity.

Viṣṇu himself does appear in the company of Brahma, Śiva, and the other *purāṇic* Gods in *dēvalōka*. Although Cennayya is also 'Viṣṇu', there is no instance of interaction between him and Viṣṇu in *dēvalōka*. The two forms of Viṣṇu occupy different worlds and different levels of mythology. But the Heroes of Palnāḍu do move between *naralōka* and *dēvalōka*. By doing so they unite local and pan-Indian mythology. The two are brought together as much on local terms as on pan-Indian terms.

Brahma Nāyuḍu enters the Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla wielding a boar's tusk. The weapon is soon broken, and Brahma Nāyuḍa continues the fight with his bare hands. Although in other episodes Brahma Nāyuḍu appears as a civilized warrior, in this encounter he is more the primordial man. He acts outside established bounds of war and of society. His transgressions of the rules of war do not go unnoticed by the Gods in *dēvalōka*. Indeed, the Gods are not content to allow his transgressions to continue without their trying to interfere and change them. They are supportive of Brahma Nāyuḍu, but his style of fighting must be rectified.

The story is as follows: As Brahma Nāyuḍu fights without a weapon, three of the classical ages, Krita, Trēta, and Dvāpara, are shaken. The chariot of the Gods is also shaken for the first time. Īśvara and the Gods have fought with the Demons; Rāma has battled with Rāvaṇa; and Kripa has fought the Pāṇḍavas; but never before has the chariot of the Gods been disturbed. When the Gods learn what is happening, they send Nārada, the administrator of the three worlds, to test Brahma Nāyuḍu's worthiness. Nārada assumes the form of a beautiful woman. He then tries to tempt the Hero. But Brahma Nāyuḍu is not swayed, and he rebukes the intruder. Next the Gods offer Brahma Nāyuḍu a weapon. But he refuses to leave the battlefield to get it, lest his opponent think him a coward. Finally the Gods envelop the battlefield in a cloud, and Brahma Nāyuḍu joins the Gods in *dēvalōka*, but still he refuses to accept a weapon from any of the Gods. When they offer their respective weapons, he shames each individually. Brahma Nāyuḍu points out how each of the three Gods is blemished by his association with a woman. Brahma has his wife Sarasvati (Goddess of speech and learning) in his mouth. Viṣṇu keeps Lakṣmi on his chest (a reference to a *purāṇic* story), and Śiva is not only married to Parvati, but also keeps a second female, Ganga, in his hair.

At last Brahma Nāyuḍu accepts a weapon from the mighty

Vīrabhadra, a son produced non-sexually by Śiva and Pārvati. The weapon is the one that has been wielded by Śiva in his battle with the demons. But even this weapon is not accepted before it is purified, and before its owner is humbled by the Palnāḍu Hero. After receiving the weapon, Brahma Nāyuḍu returns to *naralōka* and gives additional weapons, donated by Durga and Śiva, to Kannama and Sunkari. It is with these celestial weapons that the battle is won.[71]

Clearly established in the epic account is Brahma Nāyuḍu's superiority over the Gods of *dēvalōka*. When compared with Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is less bound by sexual attachments. In comparison with Vīrabhadra, he is a more forceful warrior. Furthermore, his acceptance of weapons appears more like a favour to the Gods than an admission of his own need. Brahma Nāyuḍu does not threaten the Gods's position in their own realm. He makes no attempt to unseat them, nor does he attempt to occupy a place beside them. Nevertheless, as a Velama Hero, Brahma Nāyuḍu demonstrates that the greatest of men is not inferior to the great Gods. As seen in this story, the great Gods are not particularly worthy of reverence or emulation. They are useful as allies—certain powers are within their control. Nevertheless, their area of influence is restricted.

Although Brahma Nāyuḍu is portrayed as an avatar of Viṣṇu, it is not clearly stated what this avatar has to do with other forms of Viṣṇu in the epic. As a God of *naralōka*, Viṣṇu is manifest as Cennakēśvara in the Mācerla temple. As one of the Hindu triad, Viṣṇu dwells in *dēvalōka*. Cennakēśvara functions only in the world of men. Viṣṇu (of *dēvalōka*) is operative both in the world of men and in the world of Gods. He never enters the world of serpents. Brahma Nāyuḍu, the man-Hero and avatar of Viṣṇu, moves between the three worlds. Moreover, he is influential in all three. He entirely dominates the other forms of Viṣṇu in the epic. Though a devotee of Cennayya, he disgracefully abandons the God in Mācerla.[72] The God can do nothing until Brahma Nāyuḍu returns. By refusing to accept a weapon from Viṣṇu in *dēvalōka*, the Hero also puts himself above the great God.

Brahma Nāyuḍu is first a Hero and second an avatar of Viṣṇu. No story indicates how Brahma Nāyuḍu is related to Ādi Viṣṇu. The story called 'The Consecration of the *Linga*' depicts Brahma Nāyuḍu assigning all the important characters of the epic to their proper places before the drama commences.[73] This is done by Brahma Nāyuḍu as Brahma Nāyuḍu and not as Viṣṇu or Kriṣṇa. Though primarily a devotee of Cennakēśvara, Brahma Nāyuḍu also worships Śiva without compunction. Nothing important that Brahma Nāyuḍu does is speci-

fically connected with any stories of Viṣṇu from outside the epic tradition. Although the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* call him a 'full God', he is depicted throughout the epic as a man—albeit a man with some remarkable powers. His association with Viṣṇu probably originated in his historical role as a sectarian Vaiṣṇavite reformer. There has long been a tendency for prominent Indian religious personalities to be called avatars by their followers. My own experience suggests that few residents of Palnāḍu who are interested in the Heroes but not directly involved with the cult are more than marginally acquainted with or interested in the equation of Brahma Nāyuḍu with Viṣṇu. He is known as a Viṣṇu *bhakta*; that is sufficient.

Viewed in a context of the Heroes' relations with other men and with other beings in *naralōka* and *nāgalōka*, Brahma Nāyuḍu's avatar designation fits into a pattern. Though Brahma Nāyuḍu is greater than the Gods of *dēvalōka*, he must also nominally accept their superiority. With the ready-made classical system of avatars available for use, the dual role can easily be accomplished. Peddanna, it will be remembered, becomes a Rāju by adoption and marriage. He first equates himself with the caste which he is going to challenge. Brahma Nāyuḍu is a man; but after the same pattern, he becomes one of the Gods and then challenges them. Both as man and as God, he criticizes the Gods. He does it as a God and as their moral superior.

Bāluḍu follows a similar pattern. All the Velama Heroes are devotees of Viṣṇu. (Peddanna is born of Śiva's boon, but otherwise he is a Vaiṣṇavite and even does some proselytizing among his in-laws.[74]) Like his father, mother, and uncles, Bāluḍu is a devotee of Viṣṇu. With Cennakēśvara's blessings, he destroys or helps to destroy several Śaivites: Bangāla Rāju, Ala Rācamallu, Narasinga Rāju, and the forces of Nāyakurālu. But Bāluḍu also has his Śaivite connection. The lengthy story of Bāluḍu's previous birth as Siriyāla Pāpayya depicts him as one of the most unswerving devotees of Śiva. He is the boy who willingly allows himself to be butchered, curried, and served to Śiva who is in the guise of a Jangam leper.[75] Though he was once a radical devotee of Śiva, Bāluḍu, in the epic incarnation, is an avid devotee of Viṣṇu. The previous birth serves much the same purpose as Peddanna's adoption. It is also comparable to Brahma Nāyuḍu's designation as an avatar. He functions on both sides of the division: he is an ardent devotee of both Viṣṇu and Śiva.

The Velama Heroes' central role in the three worlds is inseparable from the central time and space in which they act. The centres discussed here coalesce into a single epic world centre. From that centre, the entire world of the epic makes perfect sense. The centre is not

simply a point in a world which can, as well, be viewed from any angle, at any time, through the eyes of any being. Furthermore, the composite centre is not simply descriptive; it is prescriptive. The centre of the epic world determines the entire structure of the epic world. It prescribes the relationships existing among the diverse elements. When it is viewed from some perspective other than the centre of Palnāḍu time, space, and society, the epic world is unclear, and may appear to be distorted; relationships between the parts are not as readily appreciated. At its centre, however, the world is a coherent and satisfying whole. Isolated elements of the epic world—certain heroic stories, for example—may be appreciated from other focal points. Some selected stories have been widely popularized, and they continue to be appreciated throughout the Telugu country. As accounts of individual or cultural Heroes, the stories have been abstracted from their specific time, place, and socio-religious framework. They have been appreciated in more general terms. Spatially the setting, Kārempūḍi and Palnāḍu, has been generalized to Andhra Pradesh. Time has been generalized to the historic past. Finally, the socio-religious environment has become a kind of all-Telugu synthesis. But the tradition must always be altered in order to accommodate a more general view. Much detail must be sacrificed, ignored, or otherwise twisted to fit the needs of the new perspective. When this happens, the integrity of the epic world is sacrificed in favour of another world into which some of its parts may be integrated.

A similar erosion of the epic world may take place when the epic is used as source material for disciplinary studies, both scholarly and popular. Bhavaraju Venkatakrisna Rao treats the tradition as essentially political—dynastic history.[76] B. S. L. Hanumantha Rao draws rather broad religious generalizations from one or two versions.[77] Popular views of what the epic is about often emphasize the personal rivalry between Brahma Nāyuḍu and Nāyakurālu, or the 'nationalistic' self-sacrifice of the boy hero, Bāluḍu. A Viśākhapatnam doctor's wife with a long-standing interest in Palnāḍu stories depicted the entire epic as a record of a struggle for land.[78] Though each of these approaches has its own individual value, none of them take into account the inherent holism of the epic. Furthermore, they disregard the processes which have produced that holism. The epic world is holistic only in the setting in which it has been a continuous local tradition since its inception. It is, of course, possible that other ways of focusing the epic world have grown up independently of the tradition with which this study is concerned. As far as the written versions are concerned, however, this does not seem to be the case. It is clear that

most of the differences between the oral and the written versions are due to omissions and editing.

At least one independent, or semi-independent, tradition appears to be likely among the oral versions. The Piccaguṇṭlu are a caste of oral singers who are patronized primarily by people of the Reḍḍi caste. These singers also sing a lengthy version of the epic. Because no recordings of Piccaguṇṭlu have been made, it is impossible, at present, to determine how their version differs from that sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*.[79] Tangirāla Vēnkaṭa Subbarāvu says that Piccaguṇṭlu are allowed to sing for the *Pīṭhādhipati*, but not for the festival.[80] Even the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* admit that the Piccaguṇṭlu do sing *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, but they claim that the competing version is inferior both quantitatively and qualitatively to their own. One thing is clear: the Piccaguṇṭlu do not sing as an official part of the Festival of the Heroes in Kārempūḍi or at other Hero festivals elsewhere.[81] The Velamas and Reḍḍis have traditionally been rivals. Therefore, these singers who are patronized by the Reḍḍis might portray the Velama–Reḍḍi conflict of the epic in a somewhat different light. If such a semi-independent tradition were shown to be in existence, the present argument would not be affected. Its existence would only suggest that there might be other discrete world-views which focus through, rather than incorporate, *The Epic of Palnāḍu*.

The epic as sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* is not simply a collection of stories that are popular in Palnāḍu. It is a product of a focusing process that selectively utilizes traditional material to formulate a local world-view. That world-view is coherent from a specific perspective. Just as other points of view distort the epic world in order to accommodate it to their own focus, *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, by a similar process, distorts what it receives from elsewhere in order to fit it to its own selective focus. From some perspectives, calling Brahma Nāyuḍu the 'Viṣṇu avatar of the Kali Age' is a distortion of reality. Even placing Velama Heroes on a par with Rājus and Brāhmaṇs might not be acceptable. Nevertheless, these and other equally debatable details make perfect sense when brought into focus by the epic. Once a fundamental focus has been established, all the other material is channelled through it. A satisfying orderliness is maintained so long as the viewer looks at the world from approximately that perspective.

A manuscript preserves a fossil record of a tradition at a particular time in history. An oral version, which does not depend upon the memorizing of a standard form, preserves a living organism; however mature it becomes, it does not cease to change each time that it is sung. Thus, an oral epic is an organism which lives both in the past—the time

of its inception—and in the present. Because it remains fixed in a specific past while speaking to the present day, *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, with its firm rooting in the twelfth century, is capable of explaining contemporary phenomena without recourse to interpretive commentaries. But in doing so, the epic simplifies time into a simple dualism. The epic generates the impression that there is an epic past, a visible present, and nothing noteworthy intervening. From the epic perspective the contemporary world is more or less fully accounted for by epic events. The intervening eight centuries are invisible; their impact on the world is unappreciated as such.

Epic time and contemporary time are two different kinds of time. Epic time is mythic time in which the boundaries that define the structure of the world are not yet fixed and immutable. In it the principles which guide the present are being established to conform to the present day. In defining myth, Eliade writes, 'Myth narrates a sacred time, the fabled time of the beginnings.'[82] The myths of Palnāḍu are not cosmological. The cosmology is already established prior to Palnāḍu epic time. But the myths of Palnāḍu are concerned with the foundations of the culture that exists in Palnāḍu today. The epic is the time which charters the present day. Events in contemporary time are, by contrast to epic time, essentially predictable. The guidelines for what happens today are laid down in the mythic time of the epic. In it are the events which both explain and guide the course of today's world.

The singers of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* are not particularly concerned with the intervening years. No genealogies trace contemporary families, or individuals, from the epic time to the present. In the light of the epic tradition, there is only room for epic time and the present. All time before the epic battle is subsumed under epic time. Time subsequent to the epic battle is subsumed under present time. Each block of time deals with only three, and at the most four, generations.[83] Neither the singers nor their audience often trace their lineage beyond three or four generations. What connects the two blocks of time is not a series of historical events; it is the epic. The epic, and the ritual re-enactments of it, are a bridge between the past and the present. By means of the epic and the rituals, it is possible to juxtapose the present with the mythical epic time which guides and explains the present. The question is: What is the nature of the epic process? What permits it to maintain this intimate relationship between the ever-changing world of the Palnāḍu present and the time- and space-bound world of the epic past? What allows the epic continuously to chart the world of today without causing serious distortions in either the epic world or the everyday world?

Notes

1 The Hero Cult is not confined to Palnāḍu: several minor shrines and many of the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* are outside Palnāḍu proper. Naturally the followers of the Hero Cult are more vitally interested in the epic than are others, whether or not they happen to be in Palnāḍu.

2 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 393.

3 'The Mission to Gurajāla', p. 259.

4 'The Birth and Marriage of Bāluḍu', p. 246.

5 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi', p. 214. and 'The Story of Candavōlu', p. 193.

6 'The Story of the Deaf-Mute Rāju', p. 200

7 Yasoda Devi, 'Andhra Country', *JAHRS*, xix, p.66.

8 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', pp. 172–87.

9 p. 227 and note 25.

10 'The Story of Candavōlu', p. 193.

11 Several important characters, who appear throughout the epic, follow Komma Rāju and Āla Rācamallu to Palnāḍu. See 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi', p. 214.

12 Two stories in the epic explain the identification of the Heroes with the *lingas*. See 'The Consecration of the *Linga*', p. 143 and 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 297.

13 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', pp. 161–2.

14 pp. 212–13.

15 Robert Sewell, *Antiquities*, Appendix A, p. xxiv.

16 Republic of India, *Fairs and Festivals* (6. Guntur District), p. 178.

17 *Bhairava*: a manifestation of Śiva (frequently worshipped in Palnāḍu).

18 *Gēreḍi Gangadhāra*: a pool in the Nāgulēru at Kārempūḍi. *Maṇikarṇika*: a popular bathing spot in Benares (Kāśi).

19 Vallabharāya, *Krīḍabhirāmamu* (Śrīnāthuni Cāṭuvulu), p. 100. Gāleyya also recites the verse but changes 'Cennuḍu' to 'Nāyuḍu'.

20 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 160.

21 Srīnātha, *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, Umākāntam, ed., pp. 57–8.

22 T. Rama Row, *Biographical sketches of the Rajahs of Venkatagiri* (Madras, 1875), p. 72.

23 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 170.

24 See 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi' and 'The Birth of Ankamma'.

25 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi, p. 213.

26 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 170, note 53.

27 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu, p. 332 and local tradition as related to me by several individuals.

28 'The Mission to Gurajāla', pp. 260–61.

29 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 171. Local tradition supported by the epic singers.

30 'The Battle of Kāryamapūḍi', p. 359 and 'The Mission to Gurajāla', p. 259. Local tradition also credits several other large tanks, especially one near Mācerla, to these two individuals.

31 'The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu', p. 157.

32 'The Game of Tops', p. 294.

33 A stiff knee joint prevented Gāleyya from making the trip. I do not know if such a cave now exists. I have never heard of it elsewhere. It may have been inundated by the lake.

34 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 343. The street has recently been paved with slate, but a hole is uncovered each year at the time of the festival.

35 'The Cock Fight', p. 236.

36 'The Mission to Gurajāla', pp. 282–90.

37 McKim Marriott and Ronald B. Inden. 'Caste Systems', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1974), Macropaedia III, pp. 983–4.

38 Ibid., p. 985.

39 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 339.

40 The only time that Brahma Nāyuḍu shows any signs of subservience to the Rājus he serves is when they demand that he release his son whom he tried to have killed because of his unfavourable horoscope. This seems to be required more by the plot than the nature of the characters' relations with each other.

41 'The Story of Peddanna', p. 151 and 'The Cock Fight', p. 227.

42 'The Mission to Gurajāla', p. 275.

43 Ibid., pp. 275–90.

44 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', pp. 341–2.

45 'The Cock Fight', pp. 219–20.

46 Ibid., p. 229.

47 'The Birth and Marriage of Bāluḍu', p. 244.

48 'The Game of Tops', p. 293

49 In this case 'Raju' is a personal name and not a caste designation.

50 'The Birth and Marriage of Bāluḍu', p. 245.

51 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 170.

52 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 334, note 52.

53 Ibid., p. 321.

54 Ibid., pp. 316–17.

55 Ibid., pp. 330–31.

56 Ibid., p. 335.

57 Ibid., p. 309.

58 Vinukoṇḍa Vallabharāya, *Krīḍabhirāmamu*, p. 28.

59 B. S. L. Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra*, pp. 257–9.

60 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', pp. 343–4.

61 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 166.

62 'The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu', pp. 156–7.

63 'The Cock Fight', p. 223.

64 See above, p. 72.

65 'The Game of Tops', pp. 294–5.

66 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', pp. 348–9.

67 'The Cock Fight', pp. 226–7.

68 See above, p. 53.

69 'The Birth and Marriage of Bāluḍu', p. 107.

70 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 162.

71 Ibid., pp. 183–7.

72 'The Mission to Gurajāla', p. 282

73 pp. 143–4.

74 'The Story of Peddanna', pp. 149–50.

75 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', pp. 297–307.

76 Venkatakrishna Rao, *Eastern Chalukyas*, pp. 568–77.

77 Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra*, pp. 257–8.

78 Unfortunately I mislaid this lady's name and did not have an opportunity to discuss her ideas in detail.

79 See above, p. 32 and note 2.

80 Tangirāla, Vēnkaṭa Subbārāvu, 'Vīra Vidyavantulu (lēka) Palnāṭivāru', *Āndhra Jyōti*, 29 January 1971, p. 16.

81 Conversations with various person involved with the tradition.

82 Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 5.

83 The exceptional case is the family: Dēvagiri Rāju to Muga Rāju to Śivasingāla Raju, to Akka Pinakka and Lankanna. This is found in 'The Story of the Deaf Mute Rāju' and 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi'.

Chapter VIII

The Epic as Integrative Process

Superficially *The Epic of Palnāḍu* appears to be an account of Palnāḍu in a specific historical period. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the Palnāḍu epic world does not correspond to any objective reality. Although the epic has an actual historical time focus, a precise geographical centre, and a recognizable class of dominant beings, these are only the subject materials out of which the epic world is constructed. The reality of the epic world itself is totally subjective. It should not be regarded as a distorted model of a past world; it might better be regarded as a clear and self-consistent world created in the present out of selective memories of the past. Furthermore, the material is not drawn exclusively from the past of the twelfth century; it is drawn from the past and interpreted in the present. The past it draws upon is all the past up to and inclusive of the moment in which it is sung.

Unlike a written text which preserves a fossil world of the past, this oral epic style transmits a world which is created anew each time the epic is sung. In a performance the epic world possesses great immediacy and power. It is also holistic. Because the world is a product of a living tradition, disjunctures of time are eliminated. Because it is thriving in the same locality where it originated, spatial disjunctures are also eliminated. Furthermore, the epic world is created from its own centre: the Temple of the Heroes on the Kārempūḍi battlefield. *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, then, is a process. Its reality is not static. The epic in its totality does not exist except as a living process in a given performance. Such a performance is a contemporary manifestation of a continuous centuries-old tradition. As contemporary event and as tradition, *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is best described as a local integrative process.

On the level of the individual, integration is a process of putting together a world out of the many diverse experiences of an individual life. These experiences are sometimes immediate and sometimes transmitted through cultural channels. Experiences which are superficially the same will differ profoundly in the way in which they are incorporated into each separate personality. The differences are a result of historical (i.e. what has been experienced before) and cogni-

tive (i.e. the mental framework into which they fit) factors. Every person experiences the cosmos from his or her own vantage point and brings it into focus through an individual point of view. The world that is formulated by this process is continuously evolving.

Integration is a practical process. It is the process of transforming experience into a source of strength. Unintegrated experience is weakening; integrated experience is strengthening. Experience, whether positive or negative, must be fully incorporated into a coherent, holistic, internalized world-view before it is of optimum benefit. Unintegrated experience is an obstacle to efficient creative activity. Integrated experience, whether it initially appears to be constructive or destructive, is a source of strength in everyday life. It is a reserve which may be drawn upon in time of crisis.

Once integrated, subjective materials within a world-view cannot become rigidly fixed in place. They must continue to be flexible in order to be viable. Integration, then, is a continuous process of constant adjustment and readjustment, arrangement and rearrangement. It is also selective. New material must, necessarily, be integrated into a pre-existent world-view. In this accommodation of new material, old material must be re-evaluated and rearranged. No old material can remain wholly inviolate, and no new material can be totally excluded. A personal world-view, whatever its focus, remains healthy only so long as it is capable of assimilating new experience without undue strain. The integrative process—the process of transforming experience from liability to asset—must be continuous. It must be dynamic.[1]

This understanding of personal integration as a process is directly relevant to the epic as found in the Palnāḍu tradition. Each individual man embodies a world-view which is uniquely his own, a world-view focused through his own ego. It is incapable of being transferred wholesale to, or being totally accepted by, another individual. Nevertheless, each and every individual benefits from others in the formation of his own world-view; he also contributes to those with whom he comes in contact something of his own world-view. Beyond what is shared between individuals there is an underlying mythos. This cultural mythos determines, to an extent, what each individual world-view is capable of integrating. The individual world-view is formulated in the context of the society's[2] mythos. The mythos of a society is not the same as an individual world-view. Nevertheless, it supplies certain forms and sets certain limits on each world-view. Like the individual world-view, it is a dynamic integrative process. The strength of a society's mythos lies in its capacity to adapt to the passage of time. It

does so by creatively integrating new experience without destroying old forms. Within a society's mythos there are possibilities for giving expression to a world-view, or world-views, which are not the mythos itself. They do, however, point to the existence of the mythos. When verbalized, these world-views allow individuals to check their own world-view against a standard that has attained some authority. Such verbalizations permit an individual to integrate and strengthen his own world-view by bringing it more closely into line with the world-views of his fellows and hence the social world in which he lives. A given local society's mythos will, especially in a highly segmented and caste-structured system, contain many world-views, some overtly expressed and some silently held. They will all conform in one way or another to the mythos of the society as a whole. Some will be more generally acceptable than others. Furthermore, different ones will be acceptable to different individuals. But all will have a capacity to interpret the mythos and to integrate what is acquired on the level of experience.

The Epic of Palnāḍu is one such conscious formulation of a world-view. It is one of many possible expressions of a local mythos. The Palnāḍu tradition contains evidence of its having integrated a broad range of experiences around a focus which has a measure of validity for Palnāḍu society as a whole. Moreover, that focus has even more validity for certain groups and individuals within Palnāḍu and some neighbouring areas. Although not the individual world-view of any one person at any specific time or place, the epic world is compatible with the world-views of many people in the society. For this reason, it can serve as a catalyst for individual integration of a wide range of experience. It is a suitable model for understanding and appreciating the world from within the mythos of Palnāḍu culture.

We have seen that *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has a very specific focus from which its world falls into place. Geographically the focus is Kārempūḍi; socio-religiously it is the Velama Heroes; historically it is the latter half of the twelfth century A D. This focus is available to anyone who chooses to so see the world from that perspective. Practically speaking, however, the focus is occupied by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* who sing the epic. Through them the epic is transmitted from generation to generation. Others may incorporate more or less of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* into their own world-views. Nevertheless, in its fullest manifestation and most precise focus it is formulated and preserved by the singers of the tradition. It is formulated in a singer's own mind and verbalized for the benefit of an audience.

Unlike some of the other narrative singers of Andhra Pradesh, the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* do not regard their songs as pure entertainment.

Gāleyya consistently referred to his position in the *ācāramu* or 'tradition' and the role of the *ācāravantulu* or 'the followers of the tradition'. The *ācāramu* is particularly devoted to Ankālamma, Cennayya, and the Heroes, but it is also bound up with the rest of the epic world. In the *ācāramu*, Gāleyya describes himself as a guru and the *ācāravantulu* as his *śiṣyulu* or 'disciples'. He is an authoritative formulator and transmitter of the epic tradition. The epic itself is the sacred literature of the *ācāramu*. Those who would learn of the *ācāramu* must come to him or to one of his fellow singers.[3]

These preceptors of Palnāḍu tradition take their position seriously, as may be seen from Mēḍukoṇḍūru Cennayya's comments on the acceptance of Christianity by his fellow Mālas. When other Mālas of his community became Christians as a group, his grandfather's household refrained. The reason given by Cennayya was that as *Vīra Vidyavantulu* they were responsible for upholding the *ācāramu* of the Hero cult. For his fellow Mālas, the epic was one among several traditions which they could use in structuring their own world-views; for Cennayya's grandfather, however, the Christian religious world-view clashed with the world-view voiced in the epic. The *Vīra Vidyavantuḍu*, who had fully integrated the epic world-view within his own world-view and who was responsible for its continuing existence, recognized any alien world-view as a threat to the structure of the local world represented by the epic. Though Cennayya's grandfather might have been able to incorporate Christianity into his own personal world-view, and though Cennayya himself is not in the least anti-Christian, the boundaries of the epic itself were not so elastic.[4]

The strengths and weaknesses of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* as an integrative process become evident when one examines what the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* have and what they have not integrated into the epic world. A capacity for integrating fundamental characteristics of the Palnāḍu world is derived from the nature of the integrative focus. Twelfth-century Palnāḍu must have experienced a relatively large measure of political autonomy. At the same time, its influence was being felt on the wider political fields of the Deccan. Palnāḍu lay between the domains of the Cālukya-Cōḷas of coastal Andhra and the domains of the Cālukyas and Kālacuris of Kalyāṇ. Both were great powers in a state of decline, and Palnāḍu had ties with both. Positioned thus, Palnāḍu would have had some influence on the destinies of each. Small principalities loom larger in times of political unrest than they do in more stable times. Although the archaeological record requires further examination, the evidence available seems to indicate that society at this time witnessed a revival in Palnāḍu after long obscurity.

Foundations were being laid for institutions which have continued to flourish to the present day. The historical integrative focus was thus important.

The origins of the Velamas—main actors in the epic drama—are not known fully. They appear first to have become prominent during the period that the epic uses as its focus. The Velamas of Venkaṭagiri, a princely house of the Southern Telegu country, are also of the Raicerla (Rēcerla) *gotra*, and trace their ancestry to the time of Kākati Ganapati Rāja of Örugallu (1199–1261), or perhaps a little earlier. This seems to be less than a generation later than the time focus of the epic. Moreover, they trace their name to a Māla caste man who sacrificed his life in order to further their good fortunes. This suggests that the Velama–Māla partnership which appears in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has deep roots in Velama tradition.[5] Historical sources indicate that members of the Rēcerla family were serving the Kākatiyas as generals more than a century earlier.[6] As a story of a Velama family, the epic has integrated the emergence of a very important caste into the subsequent history of the Telugu country. Many important *zamindaris* (small principalities) of Andhra have been ruled by Velamas, nearly all of whom trace their authority back to the Kākatiya period. Among them are Nūjivīḍu, Vinukoṇḍa, Venkaṭagiri, Bobbili, and many others. Today Palnāḍu is dominated by Kāpu castes, closely related to the Velamas: the Reḍḍis and Kammas. The former are of course represented in the epic. Nāyakurālu is a Reḍḍi, and and there are frequent references to the Reḍḍis who control surrounding villages. It is only in the middle of the twentieth century that Velama landlords have disappeared from most of the villages of Palnāḍu. The epic has integrated the foundations of the subsequently and successively dominant agricultural-warrior castes, as represented by the Velamas, Reḍḍis, Kammas, and other Kāpus.

Rāmānujācarya, the great reformer of Vaiṣṇavism, lived some time between 1016 and 1137, just before the epic period. His form of Vaiṣṇavism may well have made its way into Palnāḍu during the twelfth century. There is evidence for this in the epic.[7] Basava's militant Śaivism, as taught by himself and by Mallikārjuna Paṇḍitārādhya, also originated in the same period as the epic. Though neither of these sects has retained the exact form given it by its founders, Vaiṣnavism and Śaivism in Andhra Pradesh today are recognizable as having descended from the sects which developed in the twelfth century.

When we look at these political, religious, and social landmarks, and when we combine them with the known emergence of Mācerla and

Gurajāla during the twelfth century, both the focus of the epic and its ability to integrate the world of the past with that of the present make sense. From the evidence now available, it is not possible to determine at what stage in the epic's development the various elements were integrated, but it is possible to distinguish additions and changes made after the historical inception of the narrative. Some of the subsequently integrated material is major; some relatively trivial. In quantitative historical terms, recent developments generally have a more obvious and a more easily recognizable effect upon present-day affairs. World-views, on the other hand, are more profoundly influenced by the time of the founding fathers and mothers, and the concept of that time. This holds true whether we look at the time when the American Constitution was written; the time of the biblical patriarchs; the Vedic age; or at other forms and stages of civilization. The period of the Sanskrit epics and *purāṇas* has left such a legacy in India. The ideas most firmly integrated are those which are associated with the foundations of society. This tends to be the case whether or not that foundation was actually their period of origin.

In written tradition, revisions and reinterpretations do not usually appear in the original body of material; they appear in the secondary sources. Furthermore, omissions may be accomplished by simply passing lightly over portions of the basic text which have become uncomfortable to deal with or irrelevant. In oral literature, such as *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, the basic material may be reaffirmed repeatedly, but this material is flexible enough to absorb some changes. It can thus be modified without recourse to commentaries and other secondary material. The tradition is no less sacred than a written text, but it is sacred in a different way. It is like an old living tree—not like an idol made of wood. In youth the tree grows rapidly, sending out roots and branches in many directions; in old age a large branch may even die and eventually fall away; nevertheless, the life of the tree continues so long as the trunk has not become too rotten. In its old age the tree continues to grow new leaves and twigs to support itself. These develop in response to its environment, but the development of new twigs and branches is limited by the viability of the trunk. The singers are always contemporaries of their audiences. They are not limited to singing a kind of phonographic reproduction of what their fathers sang. Consciously and unconsciously, they change their material so that it comes into closer alignment with the world in which they and their audience live. Yet the primary focus remains the same. The result is a constant reaffirmation.

The process may be appreciated by a look at sectarian rivalry and

harmony as they are handled in the epic. The twelfth century was a period of intense rivalry between emerging Śiva and Viṣṇu sects in Andhra and Karnataka. (Buddhism and Jainism had already declined.) *The Epic of Palnāḍu* retains numerous traces of this sectarianism. 'The Story of Peddanna' includes an episode in which a group of Śaivite Rājus are branded by Vaiṣṇavite hermits with the conch and discus.[8] Such branding was practised by Rāmānuja during his proselytizing.[9] Though it does not appear in the available oral versions, an even more explicit instance of Vaiṣṇavite initiation is portrayed in the version edited by Pingaḷi Lakṣmikāntam.[10] In 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi', as sung by Gāleyya, Śivasingāla Rāju almost sacrifices himself to Śiva; he attempts self-sacrifice after a fashion reputedly carried out by some Vīra Śaivites, which involves the use of a giant shears with a foot-trip mechanism—similar to those depicted in stone sculpture of the epic period.[11] In the oral versions, Akka Pinakka is a devotee of Śiva. She is regarded as an elder sister by all the men of Palnāḍu; she has never married and has devoted her life to Śiva. She calls to mind Mahādēviyakka, a contemporary of Basava. Mahādēviyakka has been described as 'wife to no man . . . archetypal sister of all souls. Significantly she is known as Akka "elder sister".'[12] These references suggest that the Śiva and Viṣṇu sects in Palnāḍu were following a pattern similar to those in other parts of Andhra and South India.

The different sects came into conflict in Palnāḍu just as they did elsewhere. Such conflicts are not forgotten in the epic. Thus Brahma Nāyuḍu is able to conquer Śivanandi Fort, a Śaivite stronghold, because he is an incarnation of Viṣṇu. In the same story, Brahma Nāyuḍu requests princesses of Kalyāṇ for the young Rājus of Mācerla. The Śaivite Rājus refuse to give him the princesses because he is a devotee of Viṣṇu.[13] The division of Palnāḍu into two factions tells a similar story. Nāyakurālu and her Rājus who are Śaivites oppose Brahma Nāyuḍu and his Rājus who are Vaiṣṇavites. Furthermore, no Velamas of Brahma Nāyuḍu's family do battle against a Vaiṣṇavite foe. All the Velama opponents, whether met in open battle or slain treacherously, are Śaivites. 'The Birth of Ankamma' depicts Kalyāṇ, the centre of the Vīra Śaivite sect, as a strictly Śaivite city: only those who wear the *linga* and ash (i.e. Vīra Śaivites) are honoured or even allowed into the city. Sectarian rivalries lie deep; the episodes in which they are included would be significantly altered if the sectarian element were removed.

Twelfth-century sectarian rivalries in the greater Telugu country and in Palnāḍu fostered distinctions of which there are still traces. In

general, however, the sectarian rivalry of the twelfth century seems to have given way in the thirteenth century to the sectarian harmony characteristic of the Kākatīya empire.

> Because of such a liberal policy, especially under the enlightened Kakatiyas, devotional theism progressed towards a syncretism of the Smarta type. As a natural consequence, the vigor of sectarian fanactical attachment to a single god was blunted and there came to be instilled in the common people a catholicity which enabled them—as evidenced by the Bekkullu inscription of Mallireddy—to revere all gods equally and to see the truth in every religion.[14]

This conciliatory spirit has been well integrated into the world-view of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* in spite of the traces of secterian hostility that remain. Syncretism appears on two distinct levels in the epic structure. On one level, stories from both Viṣṇu and Śiva traditions are brought together to form the body of the epic; there they are joined with stories of local Gods and Heroes. On another level, characters who are devotees of Viṣṇu are always ready to pay homage to Śiva, as are Śaivites to Viṣṇu. Though the epic *as a whole* favours Vaiṣṇavism, it does not represent the exclusive form of devotionalism which encourages the sort of sectarian rivalry which appears to have been the norm in the twelfth century.

The story of Bālacandruḍu's Śaivite avatar is lifted wholesale out of Śiva tradition, yet Bāluḍu is, elsewhere, a devotee of Cennakēśvara (Viṣṇu). The popular Śaivite story, here called 'The Story of Siriyāla Pāpanna', is found in the Tamil *Periyapuāṇam* by Sēkkilār, in the Telugu *Basavapurāṇamu* by Pālakuriki Sōmanātha, in the Telugu *Harvilāsamu* by Śrīnātha, and in other written sources. In brief, the story is as follows: to test his devotees, Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu and his wife Siriyāla Mangamma, Śiva appears as a leprous Jangam. He tells the couple that he will be restored to health if he eats the flesh of a child who is a one and only son and who is exactly seven years old. The boy and his parents agree to the strange request. But after the boy is slain and the human curry is made, the Jangam refuses to eat unless he has a boy child to sit beside him. He tells the parents to call their son. When the mother finally calls him, the little boy comes running. He has been fully restored. The family's devotion is rewarded. They and all their city are taken to Kailāsa (Śiva's dwelling-place). The story, in its, at times, gruesome details, depicts excesses of Śaivite devotionalism. It also incorporates the belief that every Jangam is equivalent to Śiva. This is a prime tenet of militant Vīra Śaivism. The story, however, is presented as an account of one previous birth of Bālacandruḍu. Bālacandruḍu is himself a firm Vaiṣṇavite and the son of Brahma Nāyuḍu who is an incarnation of Viṣṇu.[15]

As integrated into the epic world-view and the Palnāḍu religious climate of today, the story of Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu has not lost any of its sectarian detail. Nevertheless, its context gives it an essentially non-sectarian import. Bāluḍu is a devotee of Cennakēśvara; his avatar, however, was a radical devotee of Śiva. Taken together, the emphasis is upon the now prevailing custom of worshipping all Gods while at the same time being devoted to one or the other. Because it is a popular Śaivite story, 'The Story of Siriyāla Pāpanna' adds balance to *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. In the epic, Śiva is usually given a secondary position to Viṣṇu. Some Jangam singers in Palnāḍu were particularly proud to report that they could sing the story of Bāluḍu's avatar, 'The Story of Siriyāla Pāpanna', they were also pleased to note that Bāluḍu had once had a Śaivite reincarnation.[16]

In the epic, Brahma Nāyuḍu and the other Vaiṣṇavite Heroes frequently do *pūja* at Śiva temples. They particularly reverence Śrīśailam, the great temple of Mallikārjuna. The singers often use the name 'Śankara' and other epithets of Śiva as part of the epic devotional refrain; they use it in their performances just as they use the names of Cennayya and Ankālamma. From this it is clear that *The Epic of Palnāḍu* retains its original framework, including instances of sectarian conflict, while adjusting itself to the world as it is today. Perhaps discrete sects strengthen the cause of devotionalism while sectarian harmony strengthens a society as a whole. If this is true, the epic maximizes the strength of the world-view: it retains the distinguishing characteristics of the individual sects, while at the same time it promotes harmony between the sects.

Exactly when the story called 'The Birth of Ankamma' became a part of the epic corpus is not clear. It is certain, however, that it was integrated into the epic from a separate tradition. Its function is to fill out the Kārempūḍi pantheon. The story achieves the following: (1) It establishes a connection between prominent Heroes in the epic and the origin of the Goddess Ankamma. (2) It associates Ankamma with both Viṣṇu and Śiva. (3) It sets the stage for her emigration to Palnāḍu and tells how it came about. (4) It accounts for the lesser Śaktis associated with Ankamma. (5) It reveals the potential destructiveness of the Goddess and shows how it can be avoided. (6) It reconciles animal sacrifice with the other Hindu sacrifices and with Brāhmaṇ values. All these items are important to the people of Palnāḍu; it is, moreover, crucial that most of them be integrated into any comprehensive Palnāḍu world-view. 'The Story of Ankamma' is not, however, a story of Palnāḍu *per se*; it clearly comes from a different tradition. Among the indications that this is so are references to the

'seven Rājus of Kalyāṇ'. Though Ganapati Rāju and his son Rāṇa Komma Rāju are individually mentioned in the account, and also appear prominently elsewhere in the epic, they are usually subsumed under the 'seven Rājus of Kalyāṇ' who never appear elsewhere in the epic. Furthermore, Gāleyya's story is clearly a variant of a widespread story of Ankamma. Elmore records a very similar story and interprets it as an account of the capitulation of Brāhmaṇism to the worship of Ankamma, including her attendant rites and animal sacrifices.[17]

Other deities are similarly integrated. The story of Pōtarāju, which is included in Gāleyya's 'Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi',[18] is apparently also taken from a popular tradition. Kanaka Durga's role in the account of Pēr Nīḍu's trip to the serpent world brings another important regional Goddess into the epic. According to Elmore, the worship of Kanaka Durga at Bejvāda is not more than a hundred years old.[19] When included in the epic by a singer who is undoubtedly ignorant of her recent origin, she acquires antiquity equal to that of the remainder of the epic caste.

To say that the epic tradition is an integrative process is not to suggest that everything of importance in Palnāḍu culture has been integrated into it. Some of a society's experiences and developments are difficult to reconcile with the mythos which lies at the heart of that society. The epic world is similarly threatened by developments with which it is ill equipped to deal. A strain which emerged when Christianity was accepted by a community with a strong stake in the epic tradition has already been mentioned. Although the world-view of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* is a holistic one, a world sufficient to itself, it is not all-inclusive: even on the most restricted local level, seen from Kārempūḍi, it contains gaps. We have noted the integrative capacity of the epic in relation to certain indigenous sects. Nevertheless, some of the most obvious limitations of the epic as an integrative process are to be observed in the area of religion.

Since the inception of *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, two world religions have entered the world of Palnāḍu: Islam and Christianity. Vedism and Brāhmaṇism have been relegated to a secondary position, but the epic itself does not really deal with Islam or Christianity. In this it is true to its original time-boundaries. Conquest of the Kākatiya domains by forces of Islam did not take place until approximately a century and a half after the epic time focus. Palnāḍu itself was never under Muslim domination—for any considerable period of time—until after the fall of Vijayanagar (1565). Christian missionary activity in Palnāḍu did not become important until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, both Christianity and Islam are recognized as new and alien; they are also generally restricted to limited and well-defined sections of the populace. Although Palnāḍu has some mosques, Muslims are not prominent numerically or socially. Christian churches are active, but many untouchables who were converted to Christianity as a group are not now actively practising Christians. Both Christianity and Islam are treated locally as castes: Christians are leatherworkers and weavers; Muslims are occupied as butchers and tailors, and have other non-traditional Hindu roles. Both Christians and Muslims celebrate their own separate festivals, but they also participate in Hindu festivals, just as Hindus often do in theirs.

Although *The Epic of Palnāḍu* does not mention any Muslim names except among lists of fighting men, the Muslim community is actively and prominently accepted into the Hero cult. The Muslims, along with the other castes, participate in the festival activities. Muslim association with the Cult of the Heroes is legitimized by a popular story and by the physical presence of two Muslim tombs in the compound of the Temple of the Heroes. In brief, the story is as follows: A Muslim officer and his men were marching through Palnāḍu. The troops camped on the Kārempūḍi battlefield without realizing that it was a sacred spot. The Hero stones were not yet housed in a temple. The soldiers, unaware that they were not ordinary rocks, used them to support kettles on their campfires. At once the soldiers were struck down; they swooned, and died. The officer did not know why this had happened until a Brāhmaṇ of the Piḍugu family came to him and explained that it was a hallowed spot. The Brāhmaṇ told the officer that the soldiers would be revived only after he had built a temple to house the Hero stones. The Temple of the Heroes was quickly built, the soldiers were revived, and the officer became a firm devotee of the Heroes. Then he made the Brāhmaṇ head of the Hero Cult. The tombs in the compound of the temple are said to belong to this officer and to a fellow Muslim devotee.[20]

The tombs are unmistakably of Muslim origin, and they lie adjacent to the temple, but it seems highly unlikely that Muslims were connected in any direct way with its construction. The *mukhamaṇḍapam* (front porch) of the temple was erected in 1333,[21] only a decade after the conquest of Warangal (Ōrugallu). The *garbhaguḍi* (womb house) itself was no doubt in existence long before that. The rough but solidly built *maṇḍapam* perhaps reflects disturbed times when heroism was at a premium, but it is unmistakably of local design. The Muslim–Brāhmaṇ connection is interesting and may contain some element of historical truth. Although we can only speculate, it is perhaps not

unlikely that a Muslim–Brāhmaṇ coalition might have come into control of the cult during the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Palnāḍu was then under the influence of Golconda and, later, of the Nawab of Arcot. Local officers under these Muslim dynasties were often Āravēla Nīyogi Brāhmaṇs and the *Pīṭhādhipati* in Kārempūḍi is of this secular division of Brāhmaṇs.

Christians are not isolated from the Hero Cult, but though they take part in the festival, the epic, as sung, does not mention Christianity. Moreover, there are no Christian stories which are otherwise associated with the cult, even though Christian–Hindu syncretism is not unknown in the area. One explanation for the absence of Christian association with the Heroes may be simply that it takes time to integrate a new alien dualistic system. Conversion among the Mālas of Palnāḍu began only about three generations before the birth of people who are adults today. In the case of Kanaka Durga, less than a hundred years was sufficient to include that Goddess in the epic itself. The two, however, are not parallel: because of the British Raj, Christianity has acquired strong foreign associations, but a Goddess such as Kanaka Durga can soon merge into a familiar background. Another possible reason why Christian stories have not grown up is the lack of any compelling need for them. In Palnāḍu as a whole, Christianity is largely, though not exclusively, limited to the Māla and Mādiga people (in local parlance 'Christian' often means 'Māla' or 'Mādiga') and both these castes are already well integrated into the epic. Perhaps new material with more immediately and obviously alien origins must wait to be integrated until those origins are forgotten, whereas material which grows out of the local mythos can be assimilated more readily.

Although the epic world-view is highly localized in its focus, it does not, of course, include everything which is of importance on a local level. The need to integrate new material around a historically removed time focus precludes the incorporation of certain new material. The world religions which have been mentioned fall into this category. Similarly, technological innovations are not easily related to a past age. Most political history is also necessarily omitted. These are only a few of the elements of the modern world and of the world subsequent to the epic time focus which are not comfortably incorporated. A recent decline in Velama importance in Palnāḍu and in the greater Telugu country is also omitted. This unintegrated material suggests some of the limitations of the epic world-view. The omissions limit the extent to which even those closest to the epic focus are able to benefit from its formulation in the structuring of their own world-views.

Though the epic world has been sufficient in and of itself, it will perhaps gradually, even in its local setting, come closer to being just another interesting story. One might expect that, as communications continue to bring other worlds into contact with Palnāḍu, the epic's validity as a Palnāḍu world-view will continue to decline. More and more pilgrimage busses depart from Palnāḍu bound for the famous pilgrimage places of India, especially Tirupati; and the Gods from these places come 'closer to home' for the people of Palnāḍu. Yet even as this tendency continues, the epic period and its Heroes and Gods will probably remain a source of local identification. It may perhaps also be something to fall back upon in times of trouble.

With the information now available, it is not possible to gauge the impact that *The Epic of Palnāḍu* has or has had upon individual world-views. For the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, it seems to approximate to their own private world-view. Gāleyya is able to relate most of his life to the epic world. When he has talked of singing the entire epic, he has repeatedly described it as 'tearing out his guts' to hand over to the present author. The persons who performed *katti sēva* and the large crowds of Mālas who listened to Cennayya's performance related to the cult and its world in very personal terms. The same is true of many other people in Kārempūḍi and surrounding villages. Nevertheless, it is not easy to discover or assess what *The Epic of Palnāḍu* means to individuals. That it is a world-view composed of diverse phenomena is clear primarily from internal evidence, and also from observations of Palnāḍu, past and present, as made by the author. Ultimately, however, individual world-views are private. Nevertheless, it seems likely that *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, in its role of expressing and formulating a world-view, approximates the kinds of world-view widely held by rural people throughout India.

These ideologies are distinct both from those which are known from Sanskrit literature and from much that is based on Sanskrit literature in the regional languages. A comparison of the epic's treatment of women with that in the Telugu written literature should make the point.

In a discussion of the role of the heroine in modern Telugu novels, Velcheru Narayana Rao has delineated the dichotomous 'values, virtues, aspirations and activities' assigned to the two possible female roles in traditional Telugu literature and society. (Here 'traditional Telugu literature and society' refer to Brāhmaṇ-dominated written literature and Brāhmaṇ or Brāhmaṇ-oriented culture.) Narayana Rao has plotted the distinctive characteristics of 'wife' and 'courtesan' on a two-dimensional matrix of opposing ideal features:

	Wife	*Courtesan*
Motherhood	×	–
Money	–	×
Youth	–	×
Beauty	–	×
Sexuality	–	×
Romance	–	×
Male child	×	–
Female child	–	×
Family relations	×	–
Social respect	×	–

Female characters in classical (written) Telugu literature usually fit neatly into one of the two categories. That is to say, women are portrayed as either fulfilling or failing to live up to one or the other of the sets of role expectations. Those who fulfil their role are positive characters, those who do not are negative characters. The roles are mutually exclusive. Other roles are non-existent.[22] The women thus protrayed are principally of the Bōgamu (courtesan) caste or of the Brāhmaṇ caste. Less frequently they are of other Brāhmaṇized castes, Vaiśyas and Kṣatriyas. Women of other castes simply do not appear in the *mārga* literature.

The female roles integrated into Palnāḍu tradition suggest a considerable distance between the Brāhmaṇical ideals of femininity and those which appear in the oral literature. Although some of the same role oppositions appear in *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, others are missing. Furthermore, several roles which appear in this epic are never found in the classical literature, nor are they found among the ideals of the society upon which it is based. The inclusion in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* of an expanded set of roles thus indicates a selective, rather than a wholesale, borrowing and integration of the Brāhmaṇical roles for women.

The role of motherhood is exemplified by Śīlamma, the mother of Brahma Nāyuḍu, and by Aitamma, the mother of Bālacandruḍu. Both women embody classical features of the ideal wife. In the epic Śīlamma and a Golla woman, the mother of Gopanna, meet in front of the temple of Cennakēśvarasvāmi. Each is determined to be the first to honour the God. They challenge each other first on the basis of caste (social respect), then on the basis of how many sons each has given birth to (motherhood, male child, family relations, etc.).[23]

The courtesan's traits are found in Bāluḍu's mistress, Sabbai, and her mother. Sabbai is young, beautiful, romantic, sexually attractive,

and financially independent. Her mother has only a female child, Sabbai. She has no family relations or any social respect. Moreover, she has lost all the traits that her daughter possesses: youth, money, beauty, sexuality, and romance. She is a miserable old hag, with no one to turn to, save her daughter.[24] The concomitants of a wifely role, in the classical literature, are marriage, chastity, and subservience to a husband. Sabbai and her mother have none of these.

Mothers and courtesans, however, do not exhaust the female roles in the epic. Māncāla, Bāluḍu's wife, is unquestionably a pure and chaste wife. She is respectable, and she has the potential for being a proper mother—in modern written literature she has been idealized as the exemplary woman and wife.[25] But Māncāla in the epic is a complex character. Furthermore, she exhibits an independence that would be out of place in the idealized classical literature. Māncāla is, also, young, beautiful, and sexually attractive. When Bāluḍu finally pays her a call, he is swept off his feet. Again, Māncāla is not just a humble, obedient wife waiting for an opportunity to produce a male offspring. She shows her displeasure clearly at Bāluḍu's dalliance with Sabbai: she shames her husband, resists his sexual advances, and mocks him with statues depicting him carrying on with Sabbai. None of this would be seemly for a Brāhmaṇ wife. As a good wife, Māncāla's standards are often different. Much of the resistance she shows Bāluḍu is attributable to her anger at his wayward ways. Nevertheless, she has another reason for resisting him sexually: in order that he may enter the battle as a virgin warrior.[26] (This emphasis upon the virgin hero is common in oral literature. It is not found in classical Telugu literature.[27]) The Brāhmaṇ wife has different standards: not only must she be compliant to her husband's advances, she must actually welcome his relations with courtesans. Anything which adds to a husband's status, mistresses included, also glorifies the wife.

Some of the greatest divergences from classical Telugu Brāhmaṇ ideals of womanhood are found among the Śaivite women who appear in the epic. Śivanāgāla Dēvi, is clever and spirited. Śivanāgāla Dēvi rejects her mother's demands that she marry a wealthy relative. She stands by her decision to marry her childhood friend. Her courage and fortitude contrast with her husband's ineffectiveness. It is she who has the strength and fortitude to carry out an escape from her mother, and from the combined forces of Indrakīlādri Rāju and her father. She rejects the security of family ties and social respect. Significantly, when she does give birth she has twins, a boy and a girl.[28]

Śivanāgāla Dēvi's daughter is Akka Pinakka. Akka Pinakka never marries. Instead, she becomes a Śaivite devotee and holy woman.

Although an unmarried woman, she is honoured and respected by all the men of Palnāḍu, as an elder sister. The most powerful oath which Bāluḍu can utter is on the honour of Akka Pinakka.[29] Śivanāgāla Dēvi and her daughter come from Kalyāṇ, the home of Vīra Śaivism. This origin apparently accounts for the way they are depicted. Pranabhananda Jash writes:

> The lowering of status of the women as a class was no less conspicuous. [In Brahmanism] Basava made an attempt to remove this disparity. He tried to establish women on an equal footing with men. Thus the dīkṣā ceremony which takes the place of upanayana is performed in the case of girls also and the women, too, have to wear lingas, like men. The advocacy of widow remarriage in the society was also another important social reformation of Basava. He maintains that marriage is voluntary, the consent of the bride before marriage is necessary and child marriage is considered wrong. Divorce is allowed. Widows are treated with respect and they are permitted to marry again.[30]

Though Palnāḍu tradition has integrated many of these Śaivite tenets, they probably did not originate with Śaivism. More than just a reformist movement, Vīra Śaivism sanctioned many customs which were already prevalent among castes other than the Brāhmaṇ. Some of the more radical digressions from accepted Brāhmaṇ tradition, such as widow remarriage, are not found in *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, but the epic has nevertheless integrated and thus legitimized a more equal role in marriage for women.

Even the idea that a woman may divorce her husband does not go unmentioned in another episode of Śaivite origin, 'The Story of Siriyāla Pāpanna'. In both the Tamil and the Telugu written versions of the story, Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu, the father of Siriyāla Pāpanna, is the dominant figure. But in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* oral account, the story takes a different turn. Siriyāla Mangamma unquestionably is the heroine and the dominant individual. It is Mangamma, not her husband, who has the strength and courage to take the life of her son. She herself cooks Siriyāla Pāpanna and serves him to the Jangam. Throughout the story she orders her husband about, almost as one would order a servant. On some occasions she threatens to stop calling him her husband if he fails to do what she tells him.[31] This attitude is, of course, completely antithetical to that of the ideal Brāhmaṇ wife. Her female strength and her strength as a devotee contrast with her husband's comparative weakness.

An entire Telugu oral genre glorifies local Heroines. Every region has at least one story of this genre and many are popular throughout the state of Andhra Pradesh. Among the best known are the stories of

Cinnamma, Kāmamma, Sanyāsamma, Rājamma, and *Lakṣamma*.[32] Each woman is remembered for some heroic act. Many, out of faithfulness to their husbands, and occasionally in defiance of authorities (e.g. the British commander of Fort St. George in the case of Kāmamma), burn themselves on the pyre of their dead husbands. Temples are then built in their honour; and they are worshipped. Like these Heroines, several of the women in *The Epic of Palnāḍu* choose to follow their husbands in death, and deem it a great honour to do so. Citlinga Mahādēvi, wife of Anapōtu Rāju, is a good example of such a pure and chaste wife.[33] Māncāla also vows to follow Bāluḍu when he dies. The popularity of such stories suggests that the spirit of *sutee*, if not the fact, remains strong. The epic has integrated seemingly contrasting female expectations, and has done so without making them contradictory.

Another manifestation of female heroism is exemplified in the person of the epic figure Nāyakurālu. Nāyakurālu becomes a widow soon after her marriage. Her husband's name is not even mentioned in any of the sources. She is in some way responsible both for his death and for the death of her other relatives.[34] Her role in the epic world places her in direct competition with heroic men. In recently published accounts, Nāyakurālu has sometimes received a bad press and has sometimes been cast as a heroine. In Gāleyya's version of the epic, she is often blamed, but she seems far from being completely negative in character. Rich and politically shrewd, she is also ruthless in carrying out her designs. Nevertheless, the interpretation of those qualities seems to depend upon how sympathetically her causes are viewed.

From one perspective, Nāyakurālu is the predestined opponent of Brahma Nāyuḍu (avatar).[35] In this, she, like Brahma Nāyuḍu, plays out a role in the Kali Age. If hers is the destructive role, it is no less necessary than his. She is Brahma Nāyuḍu's worthy opponent; she is thus of comparable stature to the great Hero himself. On a more mundane level, she is more than a match for Brahma Nāyuḍu. In their various encounters, he is frequently bested. The only manly quality Nāyakurālu lacks is skill at arms and courage on the battlefield.[36] If Brahma Nāyuḍu ultimately triumphs, it is in great part because he is destined to do so. He triumphs in spite of his losses in the political arena. Though Nāyakurālu uses devious means to force Brahma Nāyuḍu to flee, in turn, Gurajāla, Mācerla, and Maṇḍāḍī, the means she adopts are not more reprehensible than those Brahma Nāyuḍu uses to further his own ends. His role in Ala Rācamallu's death and his conquest of Śivanandi Fort are cases in point.

Perhaps the most instructive way of looking at Nāyakurālu, as a

character, is as a widow. In an upper-class Telugu context, a widow is, by definition, worthy of some degree of censure. Every Brāhman woman has the responsibility for performing certain vows, or *pati vrata*, to ensure the well-being of her husband. If he dies before she does, she must accept some of the blame, and she must suffer the consequences. The widow, especially if she has no male issue, finds herself suddenly minus all the qualities which are traditionally assigned to the wife. She then either performs *suttee* or the social and psychological equivalent of it. At the least she must allow herself to be stripped of her hair and finery. Practically speaking, often her only recourse is prostitution. In any case, she is regarded by society as a prostitute. Refusing to subject herself to either of these fates, she may, if she has the ability and/or financial resources, do what she can to improve her situation. Nāyakurālu in the epic is the widow who has achieved this.

Although she is worthy of censure by society's rules, she puts herself above those rules and forces society to afford her respect. The structure of society does not allow her a position. She makes a place for herself, and society has to accept this. The weaker persons may despise her, hiding behind the dictates of society, but they must and will defer to her because of her powerful personality. The widow's position is similar to that of half-caste individuals in Palnāḍu society. Whether a person born of a mixed-caste marriage falls into the higher or the lower caste depends upon personal strength and financial resources. It is not surprising that a character like Nāyakurālu became integrated into the epic world. Nor is it surprising that different people see her in different lights. She is neither prostitute nor *sati*. She is her own category. Although a woman, she competes with men. By so doing she expands the list of female roles in the oral tradition.[37]

In the epic even the wives who most closely approximate the classical ideals sometimes have qualities which reveal a different value system. Aitamma takes complete charge of the negotiations preceding Bāluḍu's marriage to Māncāla. She and her brother make the arrangements. Brahma Nāyuḍu never enters into the negotiations at all. Furthermore, the negotiations are concerned with wealth which is Aitamma's private inheritance and possession; it does not belong to Brahma Nāyuḍu, nor is it held by them jointly.[38] In the classical sources a wife would never have such financial independence.

George Hart (1975) has referred to the sacred power of women as it is represented in Dravidian (particularly Tamil and Malayalam) literature. He stresses the importance of female chastity as a control of potentially dangerous female power.[39] This suggests a possible inter-

pretation of certain events in the present work. There is no instance of an unchaste woman with a living husband in *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. There are, however, numerous instances of unchecked or righteously directed female energy. Moreover, it might well be argued that a woman is responsible for virtually every destructive act which is perpetrated in the epic. In some cases the woman's influence is the immediate cause; in others her curse supports the dictates of fate.

The entire epic conflict may be attributed to the unchecked power of a widow, Nāyakurālu. Her intrusions into men's affairs are inconceivable of a properly married woman with a living husband. But it is not only the widowed Nāyakurālu whose unchecked power destructively shapes events. Among the events leading directly to the culminating battle of Kārempūḍi, is a whole series which springs from trespasses against chaste wives or the unbridled power of non-wives. The following list, though not exhaustive, shows how the power of women shapes events in *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. Men are often the active agents; women the energy behind them.

Woman	*Status*	*Action caused*
Nāyakurālu	widow	Gains influence in Gurajāla court leading to the division of the realm.
Nāyakurālu	widow	Defeats Brahma Nāyuḍu at the cock fight, forcing him to go into exile.
Nāyakurālu	widow	Instigates an attack on Brahma Nāyuḍu's herds while he is in Maṇḍāḍi.
Nāyakurālu	widow	Has Ala Racamallu, husband of Pērammā Dēvi, poisoned. This prompts Brahma Nāyuḍu and his fellows to go to war against Gurajāla.
Pērammā Dēvi	chaste wife	Curses her father and uncle for permitting the murder of her husband. This brings about their defeat at Kārempūḍi.
Kōmaṭi girl	unmarried?	Curses Bāluḍu for hurting her foot in his play and tells him where the Heroes have gone. This prompts his departure to Kārempūḍi.
Sabbai	courtesan	Distracts Bāluḍu from his duties to his wife, Māncāla, and strips him of his wealth and finery.
Māncāla	chaste wife	Curses Anapōtu Rāju and arranges for him to die as a lone hero for his role in keeping her and Bāluḍu apart.

Māncāla	chaste wife	Makes sure that Bāluḍu goes to battle to die so that they can all be remembered as Heroes.
Akka Pinakka	non-wife	Arrives on the battlefield with Anapōtu's blood-soaked artifacts just as a peace has been negotiated. This sends Bāluḍu into a frenzy and begins the battle.

There is, no doubt, some connection between this picture of womankind and the nature of the Goddesses. The female deities are also capable of great destructiveness if not treated properly. Ankālamma causes the Rājus and people of Kalyāṇ to suffer when she does not get what she believes she deserves. There is a parallel between the Goddesses worshipped by the patrons of oral literature and their ideal women. Brahma Nāyuḍu is an avatar of Viṣṇu, but Nāyakurālu is an avatar of Ankamma, the local Goddess.

The study of living South Indian oral epic and heroic narrative literature is not far advanced; some promising steps have, however, been made. Stuart Blackburn has suggested a correspondence between typology and social class in Tamil heroic literature.[40] John F. Richards and Velcheru Narayana Rao have examined an early eighteenth-century Telugu hero of lowly origins from both historical accounts and contemporary oral and written tradition.[41] Brenda Beck has translated a Tamil epic which presents a folk account of the history of the Koṅku region in Tamilnadu.[42] Peter Claus has focused on the Tulu *paddanas*[43] There are also others. Nevertheless, in Telugu, and probably in the other South Indian languages, there are hundreds of heroic stories which have never been recorded. Only a few are well known in even limited published versions.

The present analysis is not meant to serve as a full exegesis of *The Epic of Palnāḍu* tradition in even one version. Such a study must wait until more versions of this and other similar epics have been recorded for comparative purposes. The intention here has been simply to suggest an approach to *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. In its oral versions, as sung by the *Vīra Vidyavantulu*, it is neither a folk-tale nor a national epic. Nor is it a heroic tale of a low-caste, anti-establishment hero. It is an epic which focuses on one local, social, religious, political, and cultural world from a central spot within that world. In doing this, it establishes some kind of order and coherence in the complex world of one rural Telugu landscape.

The Epic of Palnāḍu is an integrative process. It formulates a coherent, strong world-view out of local material; it does so against the

background of a local mythos. The difference between this world-view and the world-view expressed in traditional written Telugu literature is due both to different kinds of detail and to a different kind of mythos. Here is a view of society formulated by those who are at the bottom rather than at the top. The world is concentrical rather than hierarchical. It is a practical and local world-view, not a hypothetical socio-ritual scheme. Sometimes this world-view overlaps with the Brāhmaṇical view; more often it diverges. The influence of this verbalized world-view extends throughout the local society. The epic world is self-consistent and holistic. For some persons it is a sufficient model of the world as they see it; for others it is one way of organizing their own particular world-views. The great epics and *purāṇas* of India, in their local and oral versions, provide another.

The non-Brāhmaṇ castes of India are not without traditional literature. They have a literature which expresses their own consciously and unconsciously held ideologies. If Sanskrit and Sanskrit-inspired literature is to be regarded as a vast storehouse of Indian tradition captured in the written word, oral literature is an equally vast and virtually untapped storehouse of tradition waiting to be recorded. The introduction and the translation of this one version of the epic tradition are merely a beginning in the Telugu language. It is hoped that it will serve as a catalyst for further investigations of oral literary tradition, in the epic style, both in Andrha Pradesh and in India. The comprehensive nature of the epic style as such should invite studies from many different perspectives.

Notes

1 My understanding of the integrative process as it functions on the individual level has been prompted and greatly enriched by my work with Arthur Leath Jr., Assistant Director of the Institute for Creative and Artistic Development, Oakland, California.

2 Here I use the term society in a regional sense. It is all the people, whatever their various sectarian, caste, and political ties, who interact with one another in their daily lives.

3 This understanding is based primarily on Gāleyya's comments and my observations of his interaction with low-caste individuals while I was recording the epic. Cennayya also described his role in similar terms.

4 Cennayya's Christian neighbours confirmed his statements in this regard.

5 Rama Row, *Rajahs of Venkatagiri*, pp. 5–6.

6 Venkataramanayya and Somasēkhara Śarma, 'Kakatīyas of Warangal,' pp. 577–8.

7 Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra*, pp. 254–9.

8 Below, pp. 149–50.

9 Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra*, pp. 255–6.

10 Śrīnāthuḍu, *Palanāṭivīracaritra*, ed. Pingaḷi Lakṣmikāntam, pp. 123–8.

11 S. Gopalakrishna Murthy, *The Sculpture of the Kakatiyas*, Archaeological Series No. 34 (Hyderabad: The Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1964), p. 34.

12 A. K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 111–14.

13 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi', p. 211.

14 Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra*, p. 317.

15 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', pp. 297–307.

16 Conversations with Pūdōṭa Koṭilingam, Pūdoṭa Bālayya, and Pūdōṭa Mallayya of Gaḍevaripalle, Guntur District, 29 October 1974.

17 W. T. Elmore, *Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism*, University Studies, Vol. XV (Lincoln, Nebr., 1915), pp. 90–3.

18 Below, pp. 212–13.

19 Elmore, *Dravidian Gods*, pp. 63–4.

20 Several persons, including the singers of the epic and the *Pīṭhadhipati*, have told me this story without any significant differences.

21 Sewell, *Antiquarian Remains*, p. 59.

22 Velcheru Narayana Rao, 'Shadows, Ideas and Persons: The Heroine in Telugu Literature' (Paper presented at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1976).

23 'The Cock Fight', p. 234.

24 The 'courtesan's mother' is a common character in classical Telugu literature.

25 For an example, see Ēṭukūri Vēnkaṭa Narasayya, *Maguva Māncāla* (Tenāli: Prajā Sāhitya Pariṣattu, n.d.).

26 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 321.

27 Bāla Gopanna leaves in the middle of his wedding ceremony to go to the cock fight 'The Cock Fight', p. 233). In *Dēsingu Rāju Katha*, Mahamat Khān also leaves in the middle of his marriage to join Dēśingu Rāju in his battle against the Nabābu. *Dēsingu Rāju Katha* (Madras: Vāviḷḷa Rāmasvāmi Śastralu and Sons, 1923), pp. 72–3.

28 'The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi', p. 213. This is the only instance where a woman gives birth to a female child in the course of the epic.

29 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 333.

30 Pranabananda Jash, *History of Saivism* (Calcutta: Roy and Chaudary, 1974), p. 109.

31 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 300.

32 All the stories mentioned are available in cheap, street bookseller's editions.

33 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 335.

34 'The Cock Fight', p. 217.

35 'The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu', pp. 154–5.

36 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 352.

37 It is perhaps worth noting that Rudramādēvi, the great queen of the Kākatiyas, ruled during the period when *The Epic of Palnāḍu* must have been in its early stages of development.

38 'The Birth and Marriage of Bāluḍu', pp. 250–51.

39 George L. Hart III, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 93–118.

40 Stuart Blackburn, 'The Folk Hero and Class Interests in Tamil Heroic Ballads', *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. XXXVII No. 1 (1978), pp. 131–49.

41 John F. Richards and Velcheru N. Rao, 'Banditry in Mughal India: Historical and Folk Perspectives' (forthcoming article). The oral materials were recorded by me in Palnāḍu, in 1974.

42 Brenda E. F. Beck, 'Aṉṉanmār Katai or The Story of the Brothers' (unpublished manuscript, 1975).

43 Peter J. Claus, 'Heroes and Heroines in the Conceptual Framework of Tulu Culture', *Journal of Indian Folkloristics*, Vol. 1 (1978).

Part II

THE EPIC OF PALNĀḌU

A Translation of *Palnāṭi Vīrula Katha*
As Sung by Āliśeṭṭi Gāleyya

Story 1

The Consecration of the *Linga*[1]*

The Heroes lose a wager with Krishna and sacrifice their heads to the *lingas*. Vishnu incarnates as Brahma Nāyuḍu. The ordination of the *Epic* with its cast, events, and Festival of the Heroes.

This is the first story, Praises to Vishnu as Cennayya[2] and in all his other manifestations and incarnations. Praises to Ankālamma.[3] Praises to the mighty men of Palnāḍu.[4]

The Sixty-six Heroes[5] and the Seventy-seven Warriors[6] are seated on the plain at Kāryamapūḍi, [7] playing dice.[8] Vishnu arrives as the Golla[9] avatar, Krishna,[10] and asks them who they are and what they are playing. When the Heroes tell him, Krishna challenges them to a game, offering his pearl necklace[11] if he loses. The Heroes and Warriors have neither money nor grain to wager, but they are willing to wager their heads. Krishna protests that he will never be able to carry all their heads back to Dvārka[12] and makes them promise to accompany him there to deposit them if he should prove the victor. Being men of Palnāḍu, men of their word, they agree to the wager.

Blankets and pillows are spread on the ground; when everyone is seated, the game commences. The Heroes call on their patron God,[13] Cennakēśvarasvāmi,[14] and roll the dice. But Krishna, one like Brahma Nāyuḍu,[15] interferes with the dice and the Heroes are beaten.

The Heroes have lost the game, but they refuse to follow Krishna to Dvārka. They begin to argue with him. Suddenly the Heroes are caught in a terrible burning heat, like twelve suns shining. In the terrific sunlight, the Heroes' red bodies are charred and blackened. They suffer greatly and perspire profusely, but they steadfastly refuse to go to Dvārka.

The Heroes call on their patron God, Śambhumurti,[16] and he hears their prayer. He releases Gangā[17] from his hair and a torrent falls on the earth accompanied by lightning, rolling thunder, and a mighty wind. The Heroes' bodies are cooled. In the torrent the Nāgulēru[18] bursts through the Nāyakurālu gap,[19] making a sound like a serpent. This is the origin of the name 'Nāgulēru'.

*Detailed summary.

Krishna, the Yādava[20] Rāju,[21] lays aside his *tulasi* necklace[22] and enters the flood to cool his body. The Heroes follow him after hiding their *lingas*. The Heroes enter the water after Krishna and they get out before he does, but although his *tulasi* necklace is there, their *lingas* are not. They demand to know what Krishna has done with their *lingas*, but he protests that he is innocent. He was the first to go in and the last to come out. They argue.

The Heroes use giant shears[23] to behead themselves. When they place their heads beside the *lingas*, Śambhumurti is pleased with their sacrifice and offers a boon. They do not wish to go to Kailāsa,[24] preferring to have bodies for their heads. Śankara[25] grants their wish. Thus are born the Sixty-six Heroes, wondrous men without parents.[26]

Hari[27] incarnates as Brahma Nāyuḍu. As Brahma Nāyuḍu crosses the Krishnā River,[28] a skull floats by on the current. It is the head of one who fought in the Krita, Trēta, and Dvāpara Ages.[29] Laughing aloud, the head bobs along. Brahma Nāyuḍu askes the head to identify himself, inquiring why he is laughing. The head says that he is no demon, spirit, or earthly ghost. He is a Rāju of Jalanīthi Kōṭa[30] in the South, and his home village is Rāmapuram.[31] His name is Jalanīthi Sōma Rāju.[32] He tells of the battles he has fought and how he died. All these many years he has been waiting, waiting to have Brahma Nāyuḍu look upon him and purify his birth.[33]

The characters of the *Epic of Palnāḍu* make their appearances. Pōtarāju[34] comes and is told by Brahma Nāyuḍu to take up a position on the battlefield. Kannama[35] is odered to remain in Palnāḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu announces that he himself will be born to Śilamma and Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu.[36] His opponent will be Nāyakurālu,[37] the daughter of Caudari Rāma Reḍḍi of Jiṭṭa Gāmālapāḍu.[38] They will be enemies, and the cock fight will set events in motion. Brahma Nāyuḍu sends Nāyakurālu on her way.

Praising Cennakēśvara, he tells the God to remain in Mācerla.[39] Cennayya then ordains that the *Palanāṭi Vīrula Bhāgavatamu*[40] be written in Telugu, full of courage and merit. It is to be sent to the Kali Age, there to endure for as long as the sun, moon, and stars endure. This will be the repository of stories, both famous and infamous; the heroic history of Palnāḍu, the land lying to the south of the Krishnā River and having its battlefield at Kāryamapūdi.

Brahma Nāyuḍu sends the Sixty-six Heroes and the Seventy-seven Warriors into Śivanandi Fort[41] and praises Śiva. Addressing Ankaladēvi,[42] he orders that a festival be held for five days each year. He takes the serpent pillar[43] to Mēḍapi[44] whence it will go to Kāryamapūḍi.

Addressing the assembled Heroes, elders, and Nāyakurālu-Nāgamma, Brahma Nāyuḍu announces his intention of ruling the ninety-nine villages of Mācerla. He appoints Nāyakurālu to be the avatar at Gurajāla.[45] From this arrangement the story will unfold. After the cockfight, Cennakēśvara will refuse to accompany Brahma Nāyuḍu and will remain in Mācerla. Accompanied by the Sixty-six Heroes, Brahma Nāyuḍu will establish the *linga* at Kāryamapūḍi where it will be worshiped by all the *linga* devotees.

Even when all the ages have passed, the Festival of the Heroes will be celebrated at Kāryamapūḍi. The *linga* will be worshipped and the battlefield will be a consecrated place.

Notes

1 *The Consecration of the* Linga: *linga pratiṣṭha* (the consecration or establishment of the *linga*, Śiva) or *kallu pratiṣṭha* (the consecration of the stones, Heroe stones). A chapter by this title in Lakṣmikāntam's edition focuses on the setting-up of a Śiva pillar (*bhūtarāṭkambamu*). It also includes material found in Gāleyya's 'Story of Bālacandruḍu'. This is the most poorly developed of all Gāleyya's stories. It is actually a sort of catch-all that rather crudely depicts the entire epic being laid out in advance by Brahma Nāyuḍu.

2 *Cennayya*: also known as Cennakēśvarasvāmi, Cennuḍu, Cennakēsvara, and Cennakēśvaruḍu. A common name of Viṣṇu in South India is Cennakēśava, and the form 'Cennakēśvara' and its derivatives are transformations of the common form. The name 'Īśvara' from which '-ēśvara' derives usually refers to Śiva, but note the name 'Venkaṭēśvara' which refers to a popular God that is associated primarily with Viṣṇu. Thus Cennakēśvara appears to be a hyperform. The main temple of Cennakēśava (Cennakēśvara) in Palnāḍu is in Mācerla, but there is also an important one in Kārempūḍi. See Paul G. Hiebert, *Konduru* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1971), p. 135 for reference to Chenikeshvarudu as a caste deity of Weavers (Mālas). Also see Republic of India, *Census of 1961. Andhra Pradesh. Fairs and Festivals, Kurnool District* (Hyderabad: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1965), pp. 30–1, for special relationship between 'Chennakesavasvamy and the pariahs who are called Cennayya Dasaries'.

3 *Ankālamma*: a female deity found throughout the Telugu country, she is the patron Goddess of the *Vīra Vidyavantulu* who sing the *Epic of Palnāḍu*. She is also known as Ankamma, Ankāladēvi, Ankālaparamēśvari, and Ankālaśakti.

4 *mighty men of Palnāḍu*: a list of the important characters in the epic with various kinds of praises.

5 *Sixty-six Heroes: āravai-āruguru vīranāyakulu*. These are shadowy figures who are never given individual names though they are always present in assemblies in Palnāḍu. They are represented in Kārempūḍi by the sixty-six *lingas* or Hero stones in the Temple of the Heroes.

6 *Seventy-seven Warriors*: *debhai-ēduguru poṭu mannīlu* (excellent thrusters). They are always associated with the Sixty-six Heroes, and they appear by themselves only in 'The Birth of Bāluḍu'. 'The Velama Caste . . . ranges itself

at present under seventy-seven Gotrams or families' (T. Rama Row, *Rajahs of Venkatagiri*, p. 6).

7 *Kāryamapūḍi*: a hyperform of 'Kārempūḍi', a town in Palnāḍu. Gāleyya always uses this form when talking about topics related to the epic. The form is not commonly used in Palnāḍu.

8 *dice*: *pācikalu*. For a historical discussion of the various forms of this game played in Andhra Pradesh, see Suravaramu Pratāpareḍḍi, *Āndhrula Sānghika Caritra* (Haidarābādu: Āndhra Sārasvata Pariṣattu, 1950) pp. 85–94.

9 *Golla*: the herding caste of the Telugu country, also known by its Sanskritized name, Yādava.

10 *Kriṣṇa*: though Brahma Nāyuḍu is often equated with Kriṣṇa, this is the only instance in the epic when Kriṣṇa appears as a character. All other episodes take place in a uniform period, while this one is in the past in relation to that time period. Brahma Nāyuḍu is a central figure of the epic and an avatar of Viṣṇu according to it.

11 *pearl necklace*: Brahma Nāyuḍu also acquires such a necklace and it possesses much power.

12 *Dvārka*: Kriṣṇa's capital city.

13 *patron God*: characters in the epic often have more than one patron deity.

14 See note 2.

15 See note 10.

16 *Śambhūmurti*: an epithet of Śiva.

17 *Gangā*: Goddess of water, she is worshipped by this name in the Telugu country as a local Śakti, especially by Gollas.

18 *Nāgulēru*: *nāgulu* (snakes) + *ēru* (river or creek). A small river that flows from south to north through Palnāḍu and empties into the Kriṣṇā.

19 *Nāyakurālu gap*: a steep-sided valley through which the Nāgulēru passes to the Kārempūḍi plain.

20 *Yādava*: the tribe to which Kriṣṇa belongs. It is equivalent to Golla (see note 9) in Telugu.

21 *Rāju*: *Kṣatriya*, king, prince, etc. I have left the word 'Rāju' untranslated throughout, because it is treated as a caste name and has no real English equivalent. 'Rāju' is always appended to the names of members of the caste, but it is also incorporated in the name 'Anapōtu Rāju (a Brāhmaṇ character in the epic).

22 *tulasi necklace*: used interchangeably with 'pearl necklace'. *Tulasi* is a plant especially sacred to Vaiṣṇavites.

23 *giant shears*: *gaṇḍa kattera*, huge shears for self-decapitation as a sacrifice to Śiva. In a recent publication, the shears are shown as giant hand-operated scissors: J. Nāgabhūṣaṇadāsu, *Śrī Vīra Brahmēndra Svāmulavari Sampūrṇa Caritra* (Sattenapalli: Javangula Nāgabhūṣaṇadāsu Sons, 1973), p. 432. In the epic they are described as a foot-operated device.

24 *Kailāsa*: Śiva's dwelling-place.

25 *Śankara*: an epithet of Śiva.

26 In 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu, p. 297 the Heroes are said to have sprung from Bālacandruḍu's head in a previous incarnation.

27 *Hari*: Viṣṇu.

28 *Kriṣṇā River*: forms the northern and western boundary of Palnāḍu. It is not specified here when this crossing took place, but Lakṣmīkāntam places it at

the time of the passage from Mācerla to Mandādi after the great cock fight.

29 *Krita, Trēta, and Dvāpara Ages*: the first three of the four Hindu ages. The fourth is Kali, the present age.

30 *Jalanīthi Kōṭa*: (unidentified).

31 *Rāmapuram*: There are several villages by this name south of Palnāḍu. It is not clear which one is meant.

32 Lakṣmīkāntam gives him the same name.

33 *purify his birth*: there are a number of these purifications in Lakṣmīkāntam, but this is the only one in Gāleyya's version.

34 *Pōtarāju*: a village guardian deity of the Telugu country, he is the younger brother of the local Goddesses and is often equated with Bhairava (a demigod associated with Śiva). His story appears in the 'Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi' and in 'The Birth of Ankamma'.

35 *Kannama*: a Māla (harijan, weaver) caste warrior who is the adopted son of Brahma Nāyuḍu, a Velama.

36 *Śīlamma and Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu*: the latter is Alugu Rāju's minister and the former is his wife, Brahma Nāyuḍu's mother.

37 *Nāyakurālu*: a title meaning 'female leader'. Her personal name is Nāgamma, but Gāleyya almost always calls her Nāyakurālu.

38 *Jiṭṭa Gāmālapāḍu*: a small village about eight miles north-east of Gurajāla in Palnāḍu. It is usually simply called Gāmālapāḍu.

39 *Mācerla*: the city from which Brahma Nāyuḍu rules his half of Palnāḍu. Today it is the largest town in Palnāḍu and has a temple of Cennakēśava that is of regional importance.

40 *Palanāṭi Vīrula Bhāgavatamu*: another name for the epic, it emphasizes the position of Brahma Nāyuḍu as an avatar of Viṣṇu and thus equal to Kriṣṇa.

41 *Śivanandi Fort*: unidentified, but probably in Karnātaka. See the 'Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi', pp. 327–34.

42 *Ankāladēvi*: cf. note 3.

43 *serpent pillar*: *nāga stambhamu*.

44 *Mēdapi*: a village in Mārkāpur Tāluk, Ongole District. It is Brahma Nāyuḍu's home during his exile from Palnāḍu.

45 *Gurajāla*: Nāyakurālu's capital. Gurajāla is the present-day Palnāḍu Tāluk headquarters.

Story 2

The Story of Peddanna*

The birth and adoption of Peddanna. His journey to the South. His marriage to a Rāju's daughter. The conversion of the Rājus to Vaiṣṇavism. Peddanna's identity discovered. The celestial horse. Peddanna destroys his kinsmen and their city.

This is the story of Peddanna,[1] and his battle with the Rājus of Kancerla.[2] It takes place while the Palnāḍu people still live in Pālamācāpuri.[3]

Vīravidyaladēvi, wife of the Rāju of Pālamācāpuri, and Śīlamma, wife of Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, the Rāju's minister, are childless. They have made vows to many Gods; they have visited many temples; they have worshipped at many sacred places; they have given gifts to Jangams[4] and Brāhmaṇs; they have financed weddings for the poor; but still they have not conceived.

One day Vīravidyaladēvi and Śīlamma pass the temple of Śiva and Pārvati, finding it in a state of disrepair. Realizing that they have been giving all their devotion to Cennakēśvarasvāmi, they decide to restore the temple. When the temple is fully repaired, the women worship Śiva and Pārvati. The God and Goddess are pleased that the women have stopped worshipping Cennakēśvara and inform Śīlamma that she will bear a son.

Vīravidyaladēvi makes a suggestion to Śīlamma: If one of them has a son, she should allow the other woman to be his foster-mother. Śīlamma agrees, and the women exchange *tāmbūlam*[5] to seal the agreement. After just nine hours,[6] Śīlamma gives birth to a son who is born at midnight on Monday in the month of Kārtika.[7] The boy has many auspicious marks both of Śiva and of Viṣṇu on his body. Being the elder brother of Brahma Nāyuḍu, the boy is named Peddanna (elder brother).[8] As previously agreed, Śīlamma entrusts Peddanna to Vīravidyaladēvi, admonishing her that the son of Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu should be well cared for.

At the age of seven years,[9] Peddanna is given a teacher. Soon he excels in reading, fencing, and the martial arts. Peddanna's foster-mother, Vīravidyaladēvi, gives him a horse, advising him to travel in

*Detailed summary.

any direction he chooses except south. The boy goes east, north, and west. Then, without telling his mother, he goes south.

In the South country, in Vinukoṇḍa taluk,[10] are these villages: Cinna Kancerla, Pedda Kancerla, Matukumalli, Śānampūdi, Pōṭlūru, Bogaram, Ipūru, Enugulapālem, and Piccagalapālem.[11] The Rāju of the area is Kṛiṣṇa Gandharva Rāju who rules from Kancerla. Kṛiṣṇa Gandharva Rāju has one hundred sons, one hundred sons-in-law, and one hundred grandsons. One beautiful daughter remains unmarried; her name is Mutyālakomma.

Kṛiṣṇa Gandharva Rāju announces a *svayamvara*[12] to select a husband for his daughter, Mutyālakomma. He has a steel pillar set up and announces that any man, whatever his caste, who chops up the pillar with a wooden axe will be given the maiden in marriage. All the Rājus of the fifty-six nations[13] gather for the contest, but no one is able to accomplish the task.

Meanwhile, Peddanna is on his way down from the North. Seeing the assembly below, he lands his horse on the ground. When Peddanna asks the purpose of the assembly, he is told that to win the hand of the girl and the gold signet ring a man must do three things: he must chop up the steel pillar with a wooden axe, he must ring the elephant bell that is hung on high, and he must cut down the fish device that is hung suspended by a hair.

Peddanna asks and is granted permission to try the tests. Going to the steel pillar, he calls on his patron God, Cennakēśvarasvāmi. He grasps the steel pillar and bends it double. Again he prays to Cennakēśvara. Leaping high into the air, he rings the elephant bell. Next, Peddanna grips his weapon; with a yell he hurls it into the air. But his strength is not sufficient, and the weapon starts to fall back. He calls on Brahma Nāyuḍu, warning that he will be disgraced if the weapon strikes the earth. Brahma Nāyuḍu intervenes by sending Garutmantuḍu.[14] With the tip of one wing, Garutmantuḍu flips the weapon high into the sky where it cuts loose the fish device, causing it to fall to the ground. Finally, Peddanna takes up the wooden axe and approaches the steel pillar. Since Narasimha,[15] also an avatar of Viṣṇu, is in the pillar, it becomes a wooden post and Peddanna easily chops it into pieces.

Having accomplished the three tasks, Peddanna is advised to speak with the Rāju and marry his daughter. Instead, Peddanna informs the assembly that he will return on the third day and sets out for Pālamācāpuri. Mutyālakomma sees Peddanna as he rides by and asks that he be brought back to marry her. The Rājus of Kancerla are pleased that she wishes to marry him and set out on the trail he has taken.

Peddanna sees his guru, Singampētavāḍu,[16] along the trail. He stops to pay his respects, but his guru encourages him to return to his mother who is grieving over his seven days' absence. At this moment, the Rājus of Kancerla ride up and Peddanna prepares for a fight. But the Rājus approach politely, and, being reassured by Peddanna that he will return, they turn back to Kancerla.

Peddanna goes on to Pālamācāpuri, and after three days he returns to Kancerla accompanied by Śīlamma and Vīravidyaladēvi. The wedding is celebrated grandly, but when it is time for the party to return to Pālamācāpuri, Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju is loath to part with his daughter. He is unwilling to have her wander about like a Lambāḍi[17] to unknown places. He assures Peddanna's party that he sees no deficiency in the gifts that they have given. It is only because of the great affection he has for his daughter that he wants the couple to remain with him. Vīravidyaladēvi and Śīlamma agree to allow Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju and his bride to remain in Kancerla while they return to Pālamācāpuri.

Peddanna spends all his time eating, drinking, and sleeping in the company of his wife and his herald.[18] He does not go to the court and he stays away from the hunt.

One day Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju's sons, sons-in-law, and grandsons decide to go hunting. They ask Peddanna to accompany them, but Peddanna refuses, saying that the killing of birds and animals is a sin. He informs them that he eats neither meat, red hemp, nor onion. At length the Rājus prevail upon Peddanna to accompany them. They endeavour to persuade him to accept one of their horses, but Peddanna refuses, preferring his own mount. The Rājus set out on the hunt, but Peddanna's horse stands still. When the Rājus are well into the forest, Peddanna spurs his horse and it leaps into the air. The horse lands in the forest where Peddanna ties it up in a cave. The mare foals a colt on the ground and a great tank arises there. Three hermitages also spring up along with many great seers.[19]

Meanwhile, the Rājus are not having any success on the hunt. After some time, they come to this tank where all the birds and animals gather for water. No sooner do the Rājus begin to hunt than they are accosted by the hermits. Fearing that the hermits may curse them, the Rājus respectfully request permission to hunt. The hermit seers say that they will allow the Rājus to hunt if they accede to a request. The Rājus agree to do whatever the seers ask, inquiring whether the seers want grain or money.

The seers desire nothing material, but they request that the Rājus be branded with the conch and discus of Viṣṇu and thereby become

disciples.[20] The Rājus, believing this to be a meritorious course of action, agree to be branded.

The head seer tells the Rājus that there is much power in what he is about to do. He warns them against touching or even looking at the brands he is about to put on their shoulders. He, further, warns them to exhibit no sign of pain when branded. The Rājus agree, remove their shirts, cast them into the fire, and are branded. As the brands burn into their flesh, they pray, saying Nārāyaṇa[21] and Cennakēśvarasvāmi, but they do not cry out in pain.

When the Rājus return to their homes, they suffer from fever and chills, but none of them tell anyone what has happened. After three days, they return to the hermitage dressed as hermits with matted hair. They are engaged in the tonsure ceremony when Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju's herald cries out, 'Rēcerla Rācamalla!'[22]

The Rājus of Kancerla are standing guard. When they hear the words 'Rēcerla Rācamalla', they demand to know more about this Velama.[23] From the herald they learn the entire story of Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, how he was born a Velama and raised as a Rāju. The Rājus are enraged and resolve to kill Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

Going to Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju, they inform him of this affront to their caste. They demand that he summon this Velama who has dared to marry a Rāju's daughter. But when he receives the message, Peddanna refuses to come. The second time a message is sent, he still refuses. The third time that the Rāju calls, Peddanna agrees to come. He prays to his younger brother, Brahma Nāyuḍu. Then, assuming the guise of a Golla,[24] he goes to the court. He wears his left sandal on his right foot; he wears his right sandal on his left foot; he carries a staff in his hand; he wears a rough cloth about his waist.

Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju is very angry. He demands to know why Peddanna, who was so beautiful at the time of the wedding, now looks so disreputable. Peddanna explains that his dress at the wedding was only a temporary guise. In his country they are all cattle keepers, and this is the normal dress. Peddanna's father-in-law, beside himself with rage, orders Peddanna out of the court, saying that a man without caste is without any redeeming qualities.

But Peddanna is not one to be ordered about. He stands with his legs crossed and his staff under his arm. He suggests that they go ahead and attack him with all their weapons. The Rāju asks Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju to choose his weapon, but the offer is refused. Amazed and angry, Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju wonders who this Golla is and how he dares to refuse to accept weapons from a Rāju. Peddanna announces that he will wield nothing but his staff, a margosa stick from the banks of a

water hole. He then takes leave of his father-in-law, who finally realizes that Peddanna is more than his match.

Now, the Kancerla tank is dry and the farmers have planted chick peas on the dry lake bed. A pair of celestial horses come to graze on the crops. The celestial mare foals and the Rājus of Kancerla capture the colt. When the colt is grown, they give it to Peddanna to break and train, believing that he will be killed in the attempt. Peddanna, confident of his ability as a horseman, agrees to take the horse and accepts the Rāju's *tāmbūlam*. Mutyālakomma, his wife, is sure that her husband will be killed and herself left a widow at the mercy of her relatives. Peddanna advises her to stall when it is time to enter the pyre, promising that he will return. Then, mounting the celestial horse, he disappears into the sky.

When Peddanna is out of sight, the red juice of the *tāmbūlam* falls to the earth, looking like drops of blood. Thinking that Peddanna is gone for good, Mutyālakomma's father begins to berate her for having rejected so many great Rājus in order to marry Peddanna. He commands her to dress herself for the pyre while he prepares the fire to receive her. As she approaches the raging flames, Mutyālakomma sees what she thinks is her husband's blood. Concluding that Peddanna is dead, she gives up all hope. The fire roars and rages with the addition of oil and clarified butter.

Peddanna has ascended to the world of the Gods and is sitting with the thirty-three crores of Gods.[25] The celestial horse has, meanwhile, rejoined its parents. Nārada Brahma[26] reminds Peddanna of his wife's plight and assists him by restoring the horse's corporeal form. Then, descending through the sky to Kancerla, Peddanna unwinds the turban from his head. Mutyālakomma catches the end of the cloth, and Peddanna pulls her up like a pot out of a well. From the back of his horse, he fights a terrible battle with the Rājus of Kancerla. He slays all the Rājus, ploughs the city, and plants it to castor beans.[27] Then, Peddanna, his wife, and the herald mount the horse and go to Pālamācāpuri.[28]

Notes

1 *Peddanna*: elder brother, so called because he is the elder brother of Brahma Nāyuḍu. Peddanna, also known as Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, was born of Velama parents and raised by Rājus. He takes the name Bāḍa Rāju from the caste of his foster-parents.

2 *Kancerla*: a village in Vinukoṇḍa Tāluk, Guṇṭūr District.

3 *Pālamācāpuri*: the identity of this place is speculative. It may be in the Cēdi country, now the area between Jabbalpur and Nāgpur in Madhya Pradēsh (Pingaḷi Laksmikāntam, ed., *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, 1961, pp. 7–8).

4 *Jangams*: non-Brāhmaṇ, Śaivite ministrel-priests.

5 *tāmbūlam*: areca nut wrapped in betel leaf with lime and, sometimes, spices and jams. It is chewed after meals and given on many ceremonial occasions. In the epic it is usually given to seal an agreement.

6 *nine hours*: compare the birth of Bāluḍu and his brothers, who are also in the womb for nine hours, p. 244, and the birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu, who is in the womb for nine years. p. 154.

7 *Kārtika*: the lunar month Scorpio, October–November. Many important events in the tradition happen during this month.

8 Note the anachronism: Brahma Nāyuḍu is not yet born.

9 *seven years*: the traditional age for beginning instruction according to several examples in the epic.

10 *Vinkoṇḍa tāluk*: a part of Guṇṭūr District, Andhra Pradēsh; it is adjacent to Palnāḍu on the south.

11 *Cinna Kancerla . . . Piccagalapālem*: all present-day villages.

12 *svayamvara*: a gathering where a young woman selects a husband among many suitors, it is found in both *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. The description here is similar to that in *Mahābhārata*.

13 *fifty-six nations*: see D. C. Sircar, *The Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, pp. 75–117, for an account of fifty-six countries.

14 *Garutmantuḍu*: Viṣṇu's hawk, Garuḍa.

15 *Narasimha*: the man–lion avatar of Viṣṇu who emerges from a pillar to slay Hiraṇyakaśipu, a demon.

16 *Singampētavāḍu*: there is no further mention of this person or indication of who he is.

17 *Lambāḍi*: formerly roving traders and packers, they carried grain, salt, etc. on pack bullocks throughout the Deccan. They are now frequently itinerant labourers in the upland Telugu country.

18 *herald*: *baṭṭu* or *bhaṭṭu*. Also a servant of a Velama, see T. Rama Row, *Rajahs of Venkatagiri*, p. 17.

19 No explanation is given for this phenomenon, but the event connects Peddanna with the origin of a proselytizing Vaiṣṇava hermitage.

20 This is the method of conversion used by Rāmānujacārya. Cf. B. S. L. Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra*, pp. 255–6.

21 *Nārāyaṇa*: Viṣṇu.

22 *Rēcerla Rācamallu*: Wrestler of the Rēcerlas. 'Rēcerla' is the Velama clan to which Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and his family belong, and the term 'Rācamallu' is an honorific one.

23 *Velama*: a caste of warrior cultivators, they are the dominant caste in the epic. The Velamas were very influential members of the Kākatīya (12–13th century) administration, and many of the great landlords of the Telugu country, until the present time, have been Velamas. One story of their origin from a Reḍḍi farmer is found in T. Rama Row, pp. 3–9.

24 *guise of a Golla*: Gollas are known to be slightly crazy. The Gollas are the priests in the Temple of the Heroes and appear as both allies and rivals of the Velamas in the epic.

25 *thirty-three crores of Gods*: the Gods are always assigned this number, but principally three, Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, are meant. A crore is 10,000,000.

26 *Nārada Brahma*: a mediator between the Gods and men, he appears

several times in the epic. For a brief account of Nārada as he appears elsewhere, see John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* . . . (1879; reprint, Delhi, 1973), pp. 218–19.

27 *ploughs* . . . *castor beans*: castor is usually grown on land unfit for anything else. He totally destroys the city, leaving it a wasteland.

28 The same story with additional details (especially in the latter part) is found in 'The Cock Fight', pp. 223–227.

Story 3

The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu*

Śīlamma's conception, extended pregnancy, and labour. Nāyakurālu appears as a midwife. Her attendance on Śīlamma. Brahma Nāyuḍu protects his mother from within the womb. The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu and the vain attempts to kill him. His descent to the serpent world and adoption by its inhabitants. The gift of the top.

The Palnāḍu people are living in Pālamācāpuri. Śīlamma, wife of Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, the Rāju's minister, is childless.[1] She makes many religious vows, but she does not conceive. She gives gifts to Jangams and Brāhmaṇs alike, but to no avail. At last she prays to Cennayya of Mācerla, Ayodhyā,[2] and Pālamācāpuri. By the grace of Cennakēśvara, Śīlamma conceives, but her pregnancy is accompanied by pain and great distress. Today a child is carried in the womb for nine months, but Śīlamma carried Brahma Nāyuḍu in her womb for nine years.[3] Even before his birth, this incarnation of Viṣṇu has become a master of reading, the defensive arts, and the martial arts.

At the close of the Dvāpara Age and the beginning of the Kali Age, among the people of Palnāḍu, a baby is born like a man, but in reality he is a full God. He remains in the womb for nine years and then senses that it is time to be born. He causes his mother great pain. He leaps up, striking her heart, and she swoons. Her body feels as if it is being cut by sharp knives and razors. Unable to bear the pain, Śīlamma weeps.

In her pain, Śīlamma calls on her maidservants to prepare a bath. The maidservants are at a loss, not knowing what they should do. They mix hot and cold water together and bathe her. After the bath, they adorn their mistress with fine raiment and jewellery. They lay her on a bed of wood and gold, spread with jewelled covers. Śīlamma bids her maidservants summon all the midwives of the town. The prospective mother is in sore travail, but the child, Brahma Nāyuḍu, does not come forth.

Meanwhile, Nāyakurālu has been born as a midwife, calling herself Mantravidhi.[4] She has been born for the Brahma Nāyuḍu avatar. In

*Detailed summary.

the guise of an aged midwife, she comes bringing her spells and paraphernalia. She sits under the banyan[5] tree where the women of the town come for water. She carries her 365[6] bag and wears a tiger skin.

None of the midwives is able to help Śīlamma, and Brahma Nāyuḍu continues to cause his mother great pain. The pangs become intolerable, but still the child is not delivered. Śīlamma calls her maidservants, asking them to bring cool water from the stream. At the stream they see the aged midwife on the bank and they ask her to tell them her name and whence she has come.

Mantravidhi tells them what she calls herself and says she has the power to relieve the pangs of labour. The maidservants are surprised. Normally such women are called '*mantrasāni*' (midwife), but this person calls herself by the name 'Mantravidhi' (method of using a spell). The maidservants report what the old woman has said, and Śīlamma asks them to bring her at once.

The maidservants ask Mantravidhi to come, offering many rich gifts and fine clothing, for Śīlamma is suffering terribly. Mantravidhi protests that she has just walked a long distance. All her joints, muscles, and limbs are sore and aching. She says that she is unable to come. When Śīlamma hears this, she sends her pearl litter with twelve bearers to fetch the old midwife.

At the banyan tree, Mantravidhi hides all her paraphernalia in the litter. Meanwhile, Brahma Nāyuḍu continues to torment his mother. When Mantravidhi rises up, calls out her name, and jerks on her tiger skin, Brahma Nāyuḍu lies quietly in the womb. As the bearers carry Mantravidhi along, they are full of joy. But gradually the load grows heavier until they feel that they are carrying Himatgiri,[7] the great mountain itself. The litter falls to the earth, and the bearers begin to make excuses, but Mantravidhi takes her bags and tiger skin and goes to Śīlamma.

As Mantravidhi arrives, Brahma Nāyuḍu torments his mother; the pain is like flames. Mantravidhi spreads her tiger skin on the ground and utters her name. The child at once becomes quiet. He knows what she wishes him to do. He sleeps in the womb, and his mother's body is cool and without pain. The maidservants are very pleased with what Mantravidhi has accomplished.

Mantravidhi has come to slay Brahma Nāyuḍu. She concocts a potion made up of the nine deadly poisons. Putting the potion in a vessel, she offers it to Śīlamma, assuring her that it will cool her body, and that the boy or girl will be painlessly delivered.

Brahma Nāyuḍu knows that Mantravidhi has been created by the Original Great Śakti[8] in order to kill him. He also knows that if his

mother takes the medicine she will die. If this happens, he himself will bear the reproach of having killed his mother in childbirth. When Mantravidhi administers the poison, Brahma Nāyuḍu does not allow Śīlamma to take it. For within the womb, he matches his orifices with her orifices and his limbs with her limbs. He drinks the potion, preventing it from entering his mother's body. Brahma Nāyuḍu sleeps in the womb as if drugged, but his mother is unharmed.

Brahma Nāyuḍu knows that he must emerge from the womb before Mantravidhi can harm his mother. He prepares to be born into the world of humans. After resting for a few minutes in the womb, Brahma Nāyuḍu sticks one foot out through the vagina. Mantravidhi sees his foot, grabs it, and begins tugging and pulling. The baby pulls his foot back into the womb. Again he puts forth his foot. This time, when Mantravidhi grabs the leg, the two struggle, pulling back and forth. Brahma Nāyuḍu kicks; Mantravidhi's sixteen teeth are knocked out and fall to the earth.

While Mantravidhi gathers up her broken teeth, Brahma Nāyuḍu is born. The maidservants prepare water to bathe the baby. But Śīlamma swoons from the pain of giving birth after the nine-year pregnancy. Mantravidhi, the midwife, asks the maidservants to stay with Śīlamma while she herself bathes the child.

Mantravidhi grabs Brahma Nāyuḍu's arms and legs and dunks him in boiling water. Brahma Nāyuḍu assumes the fish avatar.[9] A second time, Mantravidhi grabs him, and holds him immersed in boiling water. But Brahma Nāyuḍu assumes the turtle avatar[10] and coolly swims away.

Not knowing what to do next, Mantravidhi dashes Brahma Nāyuḍu against a *jālāri*[11] tree. The tree splits, and the child descends to the serpent world.[12] In the serpent world, the Nine Crores of Siddhas[13] and the Serpent Maidens receive him. The Serpent Maidens bathe him nine times in water and nine times in milk.[14] They lay him on Ādiśēṣa,[15] and Ādiśēṣa becomes his guru. Thus do the Serpent Maidens nurture the child, Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Meanwhile, Śīlamma regains consciousness. She does not yet know whether she has given birth to a boy or a girl. Furthermore, Mantravidhi has tricked the maidservants, telling them that no child, neither boy nor girl, can remain in the womb for nine years. She tells them to assure the mother that it was only some illusion, some trick of God. The maidservants do as Mantravidhi advises.

But Śīlamma grieves because she cannot see the child that she has carried for so long. Going to the tree, she prays to Cennakēśvara. As she prays, the tree splits open once again, and the path to the serpent

world opens before her. Still clad in her unclean[16] garments, Śīlamma descends to the serpent world. There she sees the Sages and the Serpent Maidens. The Serpent Maidens hiss and the grass is scorched. They refuse to allow Śīlamma to draw near, demanding proof that the boy is her child.

Śīlamma prays to Śankara, Cennayya, and Ankālamma. Milk fills her breasts and droplets appear on her nipples.[17] The Serpent Maidens and Sages collect the milk. Then, calling Śīlamma, they bathe her nine times in water and nine times in milk.[18] Having removed her unclean garments, they dress her in clean clothing and jewels.

The Sages and the Serpent Maidens are exceedingly pleased with the child; they fondle and caress him. The Serpent Maidens sing soft lullabies, and put the baby to sleep. Then they entrust the baby to his mother and ask her to bring him up with great care. They tell her how the child should be named. He was born a Velama in the human world; he was raised in the serpent world; he is one of the Nine Brahmas.[19] His name should be Brahma Nāyuḍu: 'Brahma' for being one of the nine Brahmas, and 'Nāyuḍu' for being a Velama.[20] He bears may auspicious marks on his body.

Before Śīlamma takes the child back to the human world, the Serpent Maidens give him a wonderful top.[21] It is silver with pearl strings. When the boy reaches the age of seven years, he will be allowed to play with it. Their final request is that Śīlamma bring up the child well and have him instructed in all the arts. Then Śīlamma returns to Pālamācāpuri with her baby.

After some years, the Palnāḍu people go on pilgrimage to the South in an effort to absolve their guilt. Again they sin by killing a Brāhmaṇ, and at length they settle in Mācerla. They never return to their home in the North. Brahma Nāyuḍu is the minister at Mācerla, and Nāyakurālu is the minister at Gurajāla.[22]

Brahma Nāyuḍu plays with the top for twelve years. One day, while he is playing in the court, the top bounds up and lands in Nāgārjuna Cave on Nāgārjuna Hill.[23] From that time on Brahma Nāyuḍu rules at Mācerla as the minister of the three Malidēva Rājus.[24]

Notes

1 She has, of course, given birth to Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju (as seen in Story 2), but she has also given him to his foster-mother, Vīravidyala Dēvi. No great man in the epic is ever born without the mother first being childless and then going through a similar sequence of attempts to gain the boon of having a child.

2 *Ayodhya*: the capital city of Daśarātha, Bharata, and Rāma of the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition.

3 Note that Peddanna (p. 147) and Bālacandruḍu and his brothers (p. 244) are born after nine hours.

4 Note that Nāyakurālu and Mantravidhi, though no further connection is ever shown, are regarded as one and the same since they have both been created to oppose Brahma Nāyuḍu.

5 *banyan*: *vaṭa* (*Ficus Indica*).

6 The significance of this number, though obviously related to the days in the year, is unclear.

7 *Himatgiri*: Himalaya. Cf. Cirutoṇḍa carrying Śiva, 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 302.

8 *Śakti*: a Goddess or personified female energy. There appear to be two classes of Śaktis. The first, which have names, are the major unmarried Goddesses. The second, which are various diseases, etc., appear to attendant on the first.

9 *fish avatar*: *matsya avatāra*, the first incarnation of Viṣṇu.

10 *turtle avatar*: *kūrma avatāra*, the second incarnation of Viṣṇu.

11 *jālāri tree*: *jālāri cettu* (*Shorea Laccifera*).

12 Trees and caves are the usual approaches to the serpent world in the epic.

13 'The cult of the Siddhas or the Nāthas, who were adepts in the practices of four kinds of *yōgas* and were believed to have been perfect in all the *siddhis* [supernatural powers] including *kāyasiddhi*, was popular in this period . . . The Nātha gurus are nine in number, of whom Ādi Nātha, the first *guru*, is Śiva himself. . . . This Nātha cult, or the Siddha cult, as it is otherwise called, appears to have been closely allied to the Tantric cult. . . . The adventures of these Nātha gurus are described in the contemporary [15th-century] Telugu *dvipada kāvya*, *Nava Nātha Caritra*, written by poet Gaurana.' (M. Somasēkhara Śarma, *History of the Reddi Kingdoms*, pp. 307–8.)

14 This type of bath seems to be used for removing extreme pollution. See p. 336 for another example.

15 *Ādiśēsa*: the primeval serpent of Indian mythology. It is he on whom Viṣṇu reclines.

16 *unclean*: because she has just given birth. See George L. Hart III, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil*, pp. 93–6, for a discussion of impurity associated with birth in South India.

17 Milk in the breasts is a proof of motherhood. See p. 250, for a similar proof even when the child is seven years old and has been separated from the mother since infancy.

18 *collect the milk . . . nine times in milk*: It is not clear what is done with the milk from her breasts, nor is it clear whether the milk she bathes in is that same milk. Probably it is not. If the mother's milk is possessed of great power (Hart, p. 96), that might be the reason for containing it.

19 *Nine Brahmas*: used interchangeably with 'Nine Siddhas'.

20 *Nāyuḍu for being a Velama*: Nāyuḍu is the name affixed to the given names of men of the Velama caste in this story.

21 *wonderful top*: this is the top that Bāluḍu retrieves and offers as a sacrifice in 'The Game of Tops', pp. 294–5.

22 After some years . . . at Gurajāla: this is a summary of Story 4, 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', only mentioning what is necessary for an understanding of what happens to the top.

23 *Brahma Nāyuḍu . . . Nāgārjuna Hill*: this episode is found in more detail

in 'The Game of Tops'. *Nāgārjuna Hill*: Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, the hill that now exists as an island in the lake behind Nāgārjunasāgar Dam on the Kriṣṇā River, bordering Palnāḍu on the west. Cf., above Chapter VII, note 33.

24 *three Malidēva Rājus*: the three youngest sons of Alugu Rāju of Pālamācāpuri and Palnāḍu, but born of his first wife, Vīravidyala Dēvi.

Story 4

The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla[1]

The northern homeland of the Palnāḍu people. Cennakēśvara becomes their patron God. Brāhmaṇs refuse Alugu Rāju's festival gifts. He and his house depart on a pilgrimage to the South to absolve their sins. Gai Kāla devours oblations meant for the ancestors. Pēr Nīḍu goes after a jasmine flower to appease her. Kanaka Durga assists him. The Palnāḍu people arrive at Dharaṇikōta. Teppalayya plunders a farmer's sorghum crop. He slays Ura Bhīma Rāju. The orphaned Uttarēsvaruḍu is adopted by Alugu Rāju. The Rāju's sins are not absolved. Mācerla is established and the Palnāḍu people settle down. Uttarēśvaruḍu comes of age and chooses revenge over marriage. He assembles the Rājus of the fifty-six countries and challenges the men of Palnāḍu to do battle with him. Teppalayya attacks without Brahma Nāyuḍu's permission and is slain. Śīlamma's vision. Brahma Nāyuḍu fights bare handed. The Gods are disturbed and offer a weapon. Brahma Nāyuḍu shames the Gods and takes a weapon from Vīrabhadra. Uttarēśvaruḍu and his allies are defeated. Brahma Nāyuḍu exacts tribute and breathes life into his father and Alugu Rāju.

I will tell the story of Brahma Nāyuḍu's fight, without weapons, using only his fists, against the young Uttarēśvaruḍu.[2]

This was not the homeland of the Palnāḍu people. This was not their realm. Their homeland was actually in the north country. This is where it was: the rivers Ganga, Gautami, Yamuna, Tungabhadra, Narmada, Girija, Troyam, and the Silēru beyond Kollēram.[3] Seventy *amadas*[4] beyond the Silēru is Ayodhya, the city Lord Rāma ruled. Seventy *amadas* beyond Ayodhya is the city Kārtavīrya Arjuna ruled, golden Jambanipuri.[5] Sixty *amadas* beyond golden Kāmboja is the city of Viśadvārigāvari.[6] Twenty *amadas* from the city of Viśadvārigāvari, where the northern ocean is deep and there are herds of elephants, is the great city of Pālamācāpuri,[7] homeland of the Palnāḍu Heroes.[8]

This is the story of why they came to the southern land. This is what transpired in those days.

The patron God of the Palnāḍu people was, at first, Śrīranga

Nāyakuḍu. One day the men of Palnāḍu went hunting led by Alugu Rāju. While the elders were hunting, they chanced upon a forest hermitage in which the venerable Cennakēśvarasvāmi was the manifestation of Viṣṇu. They brought him back to the city and made him their patron God.[9] He is the same Cennakēśvarasvāmi who was brought here from Pālamācāpuri. Then they cast aside Śrīranga Nāyakuḍu and worshipped this manifestation of Viṣṇu saying, 'You are Hari; you are guru; you are father; you are mother; truly, you are life breath itself.' This was the reverence they showed to that God.

One day Alugu Rāju and his minister, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu sat with all the elders. Both great and small, they were thinking, 'Today is a great festival day. We must make golden fruit. When the fruit is made we must call the Brāhmaṇs and give them gifts.' This is what the elders were thinking.

They called the Brāhmaṇs, 'Kāśīrājabayya, record keeper Peddibhaṭṭu, Durgayyabhaṭṭu, Enaballamācayya, Ekāmbarayya, Pappumādavelammi, Goppalasiribhaṭṭu, Kuntimādayya. Come, Brāhmaṇs! Fathers!'[10]

Heeding the call, the Brāhmaṇs came to the court. They wore ochre robes, and they carried water pots, ash pots, sacred grass,[11] and antelope skins. Straightaway, the Brāhmaṇs came to the court.

When the Brāhmaṇs arrived at the court, all the elders of Palnāḍu had fine mats spread on the ground. The Brāhmaṇs were seated and the elders showed them great respect saying, 'Worthy Brāhmaṇs, today is the Dasarā festival.[12] We have seen fit to give gifts, and have accordingly prepared golden fruit and all manner of presents. Take these gifts.'

But the Brāhmaṇs said, 'Father! Alugu Rāju, we will accept no gifts from your hands.'

'What is it, Great Souls, Worthy Brāhmaṇs? What prevents you from accepting our gifts? Tell us, Worthy Brāhmaṇs.'

'Fathers! Alugu Rāju and Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, your house is guilty of murdering children, sages, and cows. You have committed these great sins; that is why we refuse your gifts.'

'Fathers! Worthy Brāhmaṇs, tell us how our guilt can be absolved. Tell us, Worthy Brāhmaṇs.'

'Father, I will tell you. Listen carefully. The men must place Cennakēśvarasvāmi in a palanquin and set forth with conch, gong, mendicants' pouch, and banner pole.[13] They must sing "Hari Rām"[14] as they march along. The women must clothe themselves in indigo saris and blouses, and carry Lakṣmidēvi[15] on her throne. All the people of Pālamācāpuri, Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras,[16] must

make a pilgrimage. You must roam from sea to sea and journey to the holy places of the South: Tirupati, Śrīrangam, Kānci, Kālahasti, Upper Ahōbalam, Mahānandi, Pālanka, and Parvatam.[17] Alugu Rāju, you are the chief. At Parvatam you must bathe in Pātāḷaganga.[18] You must have a golden cow made. When it is finished you must pass through the womb of that cow. Emerging, you must place your silk cloak on the back of a Brāhmaṇ. Have an audience with him and your entire guilt will be absolved.' Thus spoke the Brāhmaṇ.

When the elders heard this, they were all exceedingly pleased. They decorated all the city of Pālamācāpuri with garlands and made that day a festival. Then they set forth as the Brāhmaṇ had said. The women wore indigo saris and indigo blouses; they carried Goddess Lakṣmi on her throne. Then men carried the palanquin of Cennakēśvarasvāmi. They set forth with conch, gong, mendicants' pouch, and banner pole; they sang 'Hari Rām'.

In the city was a *jammi* tree.[19] They dug up the *jammi* tree along with its roots and tied it to a serpent pillar. In this way they set forth. As they set out, the composition of the army was this: Śimbuni Muta wielding the double-edged sword; Bobbili Muta wielding the great sword; brave Tāvula Pōtu Nēḍu; Gandham Oppi Nēḍu; Sūgaṇḍi, the wrestler who fights what he sees. With hairlocks, garlands of flowers, cymbals, great drums, and bells, there were 24,000 Gōsangi soldiers.[20] Then there were Cikkuls, Cinguls, Arabs, Rohilas, Mughals, and Paṭāṇs.[21] With clubmen, macemen, Ābēdārs, and Śubedars,[22] the army set forth. They carried these weapons: shield, dagger, lance, club, mace, blowdart, axe, and battleaxe.

As they set out, fully armed, Cennakēśvarasvāmi looked on with wonder. 'O Father! Alugu Rāju, you are all marching forth fully armed, and you are men of Palnāḍu. Wherever you go, there you will fight. You will die. What will be my lot? I refuse to come,' he said.

'What's this, Great Soul? You are mother; you are father; you are Hari; you are guru; indeed, you are life breath itself. We will do as you say,' they said.

'The whole army must bundle up its weapons and tie them on to this *jammi* tree. When you have done that, if you still wish for me to come, I will follow you,' said Cennakēśvarasvāmi.

As ordered, they bound up all the weapons, tied them on to the *jammi* tree, and affixed a seal. When they were again starting out, Alugu Rāju looked at them with astonishment.

'O Lord! Cennayya of Mācerla! Patron Deity! Cennayya of Ayodhyā! Protector of our souls! Cennayya of Kāceli! Husband of Kānci! Guardian of Kāśi![23] Auspicious Syllable! O Lord! Lord Cen-

nakēśvara, you are mother; you are father. The army is gathered; it extends sixty *amadas* that way and thirty *amadas* this way. You told us to lay down our weapons, bundle them, and seal them on this *jammi* tree. We have done as you ordered. But two [stubborn] Gollas[24] with Golla loincloths have refused to give up their weapons,' said Alugu Rāju.

Two men told Brahma Nāyuḍu and Alugu Rāju that they would not hand over their weapons.

'Ask them again. Ask them again, Alugu Rāju,' said Cennakēśvara.

They asked Pēr Nīḍu and Teppali Nīḍu[25] for their weapons. The two gave up their weapons. First came Pēr Nīḍu; after him came Teppalayya. They came before the great and small, the army, and the God.

The people of Palnāḍu travelled and travelled. For three months and fifteen days they travelled on, at last arriving at Gaya.[26] The mighty warriors of Palnāḍu arrived at Gaya. As they reached Gaya, the sun set behind the Western Mountain. Deep darkness covered the whole earth. The stars shone in the sky; doves went to their nests. As they arrived at Gaya, the sun set.

The men of Palnāḍu pitched their tents of many kinds. They pitched tents of silver silk; they pitched tents of gold silk; for shade they pitched blue silk tents; for sleeping they pitched . . . silk tents. When the tents were pitched, they camped at Gaya.

The dawn broke; they rose up; it was time to travel. But they said, 'We have come to Gaya. The Brāhmaṇ told us we are guilty. Let us remain here for some time, bathing in Ganga[27] and offering oblations to our ancestors. Our sins will be absolved.'

They began bathing in Ganga and offering oblations at Gaya. For three months and fifteen days they remained at Gaya. All the people of Palnāḍu, both men and women, remained there. The God also remained.

There was a Śakti at Gaya; she was called Gai Kāla. When the people of Palnāḍu offered oblations to their ancestors, the Śakti took the oblations and ate them herself. One day this Durga[28] of Gaya rose up to the sky in all her fullness. 'O Father! Alugu Rāju, I am Gai Durga. I am devouring all the oblations that you offer to your ancestors. Nothing is reaching them,' she said.

'Gai Durga, why do you do this? We will give you offerings. You must accept our offerings. When we have finished making oblations to our ancestors, we will go. We will give you boiled rice as high as a haystack; we will give you boiled millet as high as a hill; we will sacrifice a bull buffalo in your name, and give it to you as an offering.'

'Good! Father, you must give me offerings as you have said. Three

hundred and sixty *amadas* from here, in the serpent world, is the jasmine flower of Kişkindha.[29] One of you must go and get that flower before the morning star rises in the east. With that flower you must perform *pūja*[30] to me. That is the offering that you must make,' she said.

Brahma Nāyuḍu and Alugu Rāju considered who should make the trip. 'He must go 360 *amadas*; he must return; he must bring back the jasmine flower; he must perform *pūja* for the Śakti,' they thought.

All the men of Palnāḍu are capable of travelling with the speed of the wind. They are capable of travelling many *amadas*.

Then Pēr Nīḍu spoke. 'O Elder Brother, I will go and bring it back,' he said.

Pēr Nīḍu prepared for the journey and said goodbye. When he had grasped his weapon tightly in his hand and was about to leave, Gai Durga rose up to the sky and said, 'O Father! Pēr Nīḍu, pehaps you are thinking of yourself as a hero, skilled in war and unsurpassed in valour. Never mind that. It is useless. Kanaka Durga[31] of Bejavāḍa is my elder sister. Go to Kanaka Durga and get her permission. She will show you a path to the serpent world. Follow that path, and bring back the flower. Unless you do as I say, you will never accomplish the task.' When she had spoken, she gave him the signet ring from her finger.

Pēr Nīḍu put the ring on his finger and sped off with the speed of the wind. After some time, he arrived at the house of Kanaka Durga of Bejavāḍa. Kanaka Durga was not at home. She had a three . . . iron bed. She had left this bed under the guard of a Śakti and had gone to the shore for bodies to devour.

She called the one hundred and one Śaktis:[32] 'Come screaming Karpari! Come Dun Eyed One! Hey! Come Tiger [rider]! Come Snake Ornamented One! Come Mutyāla! Come Golden One! Come Cholera! Come Mistress of the Cemetery! Come Peeping Goddess! Come Coarse Damsel! Come Mother of the Nandas! Come Goddess of the Centre of the House! Come Goddess of the Bulls! Come Conqueror of . . .! Come . . .! Come Vārāhi!'[33]

Taking these Śaktis with her, Kanaka Durga went to the shore for corpses. Meanwhile, Pēr Nīḍu arrived at her house. When he got there, the guardian Śakti said, 'Hey! Who are you? Who are you to come like this? You can't pass this way!'

Hearing this, Pēr Nīḍu became fearsome and wrathful. Taking his weapon firmly in his hand, he sat on the bed. The guardian Śakti tried to bully him, but he was unmoved.

The Śakti went running to the shore. 'O Elder Sister! Kanaka Durga!' she said.

'What is it, Woman?'[34]

'Someone has come, and he is sitting on your iron bed. No matter how I try to frighten him away, he remains unmoved, fierce, and warlike.'

Kanaka Durga and the Śaktis had feasted on elephant carcasses. The One hundred and one Śaktis had bundled up the remaining carcasses and were about to return home when the Śakti arrived. When she heard the news, Kanaka Durga flared up; she was overcome with a towering rage. Throwing the bundles of carcasses this way and that, she ran home.

When she arrived at her home, Kanaka Durga found Pēr Nīḍu lying on the bed. She shook it violently. Pēr Nīḍu threw off the covers to see what was happening. The Śakti was there in a mighty rage. Pēr Nīḍu rose up, shining with valour. Grasping his weapon, he gave a mighty battle cry and stood ready to attack. As he rose up, Kanaka Durga spied the signet ring that her younger sister had given him. No sooner did she see the ring than she fell to the ground in a swoon.

Regaining consciousness, Kanaka Durga rose to her feet and said, 'Great Soul, who are you? What is your caste? What is your clan? Tell me, Great Soul.'

'O Śakti, I will tell you. A shining scion of the lunar race is the ruler Alugu Rāju. Married to Vidyaladēvi, his third son was born by a boon of Śiva. Mallikārjuna is born in the likeness of a man as Pedda Malidēva, lord of the earth. The minister of that Rāju is Viṣṇu incarnate. Born the son of Rēcerla Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and Śīlamma, he is the lotus-eyed one, Kriṣṇa of the Kali age, the incarnation of mercy. He is born on the earth as Brahmayya. I am his younger brother. My name is Pērayya. Pay heed to my words.'[35]

'O Great Soul! Pērayya! Why have you come here, Great Soul?' she said.

'Woman, we are from Pālamācāpuri. Three months and fifteen days we travelled and came to Gaya. We were on our way south on a pilgrimage to absolve our sins. When we camped at Gaya, we decided to spend some days bathing in Ganga and offering oblations to our ancestors. We spent a few days bathing and offering oblations, but Gai Durga, your younger sister, devoured all the offerings we made. One day she said, "O Father, you are offering oblations to your ancestors, but I am eating the offerings and they are not getting any of them. You are gaining no merit from these oblations." We said, "We will give you boiled rice as high as a haystack; we will give you boiled millet as high as a mountain; we will sacrifice a bull buffalo in your name and give it to you as an offering." Gai Durga, your younger sister, said, "In the

serpent world is the jasmine flower of Kişkinda. It is 360 *amadas* from here. You must bring that flower before the morning star rises and do *pūja* to me." Hearing that, I set out. When I was about to leave, she said, 'You can't go like that. My elder sister, Kanaka Durga, is in Bejavāḍa. Take leave of her, and she will show you a path to the serpent world. Follow the path; get the flower; take leave of my elder sister; return here; and perform *pūja* to me." I told her that I would do as she said, and so I have come.'

He did obeisance to Kanaka Durga.

'O Father! Pēr Nīḍu, come. I will show you the path,' she said.

Kanaka Durga showed him the cave of the serpent world.[36] The Nine Siddhas were stationed in the garden to keep anyone from cutting the jasmine flower. As Pēr Nīḍu was about the cut the flower, he was attacked by the Nine Siddhas. They fought a terrible battle. They fought like Vāli and Sugrīva; they fought like Karṇa and Arjuna.[37] When the battle was over, some of the Siddhas were dead. Pēr Nīḍu cut the flower, returned to Kanaka Durga, and took leave of her. Before the morning star rose, the mighty warrior arrived once again in Gaya.

At Gaya they did *pūja* to the Śakti. They offered boiled rice as high as a haystack, boiled millet as high as a mountain, and a bull buffalo. By this means they propitiated the Śakti. Then all the elders bathed in the Ganga and offered oblations to the ancestors.

When this was finished, the army and all the people of Palnāḍu rose up and resumed their journey. For three months and fifteen days they marched on, full of joy. Brass drums, hand drums, lutes, . . ., double drums, and gongs sounded as they marched along. Chowries, flags, and solar banners waved as dancing girls and . . . went along . . ., whisks, parasols . . ., . . ., war flags, and all manner of umbrellas and banners were carried aloft.[38] All the people of Palnāḍu, men and women alike, arrived, after three months, at Dharaṇikōṭa.[39]

For three months and fifteen days they remained at Amarāvati, doing *pūja* to Amaralingasvāmi.[40] They pitched their tents and remained there.

One day, Teppalayya took his 24,000 Gōsangi warriors and went hunting on Munugōḍu Island.[41] What they hunted were these: gayal, axis deer, crocodiles, wild boar, mountain sheep, peacock, numidian crane, lapwing, crane, black cock, and water cock. Teppali Nīḍu[42] started home after bagging all these animals.

Now Annavala Pappa Reḍḍi[43] of Munugōḍu Island had planted a field of sorghum. The sorghum was ripening and harvest time was drawing near. He built a platform in the field and sat on it, guarding the crop. Near the field was a banyan tree. Teppalayya and his soldiers

paused under the tree to rest. Annavala Pappa Reḍḍi observed them and thought, 'Who might this be? He seems to be a Rāju. It is not right for me to remain seated.' Politely he got down from the platform. Taking some ears of sorghum, he threshed them out in his hand and gave them to the Rāju.[44]

Unfortunately, they knew nothing about sorghum. It was white sorghum, and it was very white. Teppalayya though the kernels might be vegetative pearls. He decided to take them to the women in the Rājus' wives' chambers so that they might string them on silk threads with gold needles. The women could wear them on their necks and they would be very beautiful. He did not eat the grain but gave it to the women of the court.

'What is this? Never have we seen such a thing as vegetative pearls. This is a wilderness. Perhaps they grow here,' said the women in the Rajus' wives' chambers. They had golden needles brought, and making holes in the grain, they strung the sorghum on silk thread. When they wore them around their necks, the white strands were very beautiful to behold.

The women said, 'O Father! Son! Teppalayya, you went hunting in the forest, and somewhere or other you found these vegetative pearls. You gave them to us, and they are very beautiful. You must bring us one of the plants on which they grow, so that we can see what it is like and what kind of leaves it has.'

'I have brought them all these and now they want a plant as well,' thought Teppalayya. 'O.K., I will not go today or tomorrow, but on the third day I will go,' said Teppalayya and took leave of the women.

Teppalayya waited until the third day and then went hunting once again. He hunted. He slew gayal, axis deer, crocodile, wild boar, mountain sheep, peacock, numidian crane, lapwing, black cock, and water cock. He placed the game on a cart and set out for home. Again he paused under the same banyan tree.

The Reḍḍi was surprised to see them again. He thought, 'The day before yesterday these Rājus came and sat under my banyan tree. I thought it impolite to remain seated, and took some ears of sorghum, giving them the kernels. Now, today, they are back again. The day is not propitious. Perhaps they have come to rob me.'

This time the Reḍḍi did not get down from his platform. Teppalayya and his men waited and waited, but still the Reḍḍi did not get down from his platform. Finally, Teppalayya called a messenger and said, 'O Messenger, go to the Reḍḍi and ask him to give you a plant.'

The messenger went. 'O Father! Sir Reḍḍi, my Rāju told me to get a plant and bring it to him,' he said.

'I won't give you one. Take off!' he said.

The messenger went back and reported to the Rāju. Teppalayya said, 'He has gone to a lot of work to raise it. Those pearls are worth a lot of money. We don't need to have them as gifts. That would not be according to *dharma*. It is unjust for us to take the crop without any recompense. We will give whatever it is worth. Go and tell him that we will give whatever he asks.'

'Father, whatever be the cost, give us one plant. If you will give us a plant, we will give you whatever you ask,' said the messenger.

'Don't touch a single plant. And don't even touch the earth they are growing in. Take off!' said the Reḍḍi.[45]

The messenger came back and reported to Teppalayya.

When he heard what the Reḍḍi had said, Teppalayya was amazed. He became very angry. 'I didn't ask for anything free. I said I would pay him. What excuse does he have for not giving what I have asked. I didn't expect him to give it for nothing. I told him I would pay for it,' he said.

Teppalayya preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache;[46] his eyes reddened; nothing could make him happy.

When it was time to return home with the army, Teppalayya dispatched his soldiers to the fields. When Teppalayya and his soldiers got to the field, each man pulled up a stalk. The entire field was taken.

The Reḍḍi observed what was happening. 'What is the meaning of this? I treated them respectfully, and now they are wrongfully destroying my field. I can't fight them by myself; it is not within my power to do so. I feel a great pain in my belly. I went to a lot of trouble to plant this field. Now, when it is ready to be harvested and eaten, these Rājus come along and tear it up. I have a great pain in my belly, but what am I to do? A lone man cannot fight them,' he thought.

They were leaving without a word. The Reḍḍi stood up on his platform and said, 'Hey there! Who are you? Sir Rāju, three days ago you came and I treated you most respectfully. But you did not cherish the respect I paid you. You have torn up my field and now you are leaving. Do you know why I have remained silent? I do not have the permission of my overlord, Ūra Bhīma Rāju.[47] If I had the permission of my Rāju, I would cut your neck and separate your head from your body.' He was unable to bear the pain in his belly.

Teppalayya heard what the Reḍḍi said, but he made no response. He went back to Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa. Every man went to his house and gave sorghum to his family.

Now, Alugu Rāju was the chief. Everywhere he went, he was

accompanied by the Seventy-two Clansmen,[48] the Sixty-six Heroes, the Seventy-seven Warriors, and all the rest. Every day, in the morning and in the evening, he held court. That was his custom. One day Teppalayya rose up in the morning, put the marks of Viṣṇu on his forehead and went before Alugu Rāju. Full of grief, he did obeisance to the Rāju.

Aluga Rāju wondered at this, and said, 'Father! Son! Teppalayya, when you come before me in the court, you are always full of joy. Today you are weighed down with sorrow. Why do you come and so sadly bow before me?'

'I will tell you. Listen carefully to what I say. On Munugōḍu Island is a Reḍḍi and this is what he has done,' said Teppalayya.

When he had heard what Teppalayya had to say, Alugu Rāju said, 'Why have you kept this to yourself? Whatever comes up, be it good or bad, you must share it with me in court.'

Hearing these words, Teppalayya was filled with wrath. Consumed with a great rage, weapon in hand, he took his 24,000 Gōsangi warriors and marched on Dharaṇikōṭa. Unfortunately for the Rāju, he knew nothing of what had transpired. He knew nothing about the Reḍḍi. Teppalayya attacked Ūra Bhīma Rāju of Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa. The two met and fought a terrible, terrible battle. Ūra Bhīma Rāju was a mighty warrior; Teppalayya was also a might warrior. The manner of their fighting was this: like two bulls mauling, like rutting elephants churning the earth, like mountains clashing together. They clashed and fought, and the battle they fought was not according to *dharma*. It was not just a war. Heads fell to the earth and lay gaping. . . . This is how they fought: the sky reddened overhead; hands fell useless to the ground. Thus was the battle that Teppalayya and Ūra Bhīma Rāju fought.

Teppalayya slew Ūra Bhīma Rāju. Gaya Bhīma Rāju, brother-in-law of Ūra Bhīma Rāju, fled to Cintapalli fort.[49] Ūra Bhīma Rāju had one and only one son, one protector of the world. The boy was a six-month-old baby and he lay in the cradle. His name was Uttarēśvaruḍu; he was born of Īśvara's[50] boon.

Teppalayya approached the boy with his weapon held firmly in his hand. He was about to behead Uttarēśvaruḍu. Then the mother, the child being her only son, called out, 'Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! O Sāmbaśiva! What a sin this is and what an injustice. Stealer of Gauri's Heart! One who bears Gangā on his Body! Serpent Braceleted! Rider of Nandi! Slayer of the Elephant Demon! Kāma Bhasmanga! Poison Necked! Bringer of the Time of Destruction! Sakala Bhūtēśvara! Śarabhavatāra! One with an Eye on His

Forehead! Great Lord,[51] listen to what I say. Lord! Teppalayya, I have but one son. It is against *dharma* to kill a little boy.'

The boy's mother wept many grievous tears. 'Father, we were not at enmity with you. My man had no idea that you were about to attack. You came from we know not where. Unjustly you came and slew all my kith and kin. You have slain them all with your weapon. Father, this child is but six years of age. Protector of Kāśi, Teppalayya,' she said.

The mother cried many grievous tears. Pearl-like tears covered all her face. She called, 'Hari! Hari! Hari!' Her waist bent and she fell to the earth. But though she wept, Teppalayya did not heed her entreaties. He took the child and gave it to Alugu Rāju. At that time Alugu Rāju had no offspring of his own.

They remained there for some time, worshipping Amaralingasvāmi. Then all the people of Palnāḍu rose up; all the Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras set out once again on their journey. From Amarāvati they went to the Koṇḍavīdu country, to the towns of Cīrālā, Pērālā, Yātapālamu, Kannapilliki, Ganjam: Cinna Ganjam and Pedda Ganjam.[52] From there they went to Tirupati, Śrīrangam, Kānci, Kālahasti, Upper Ahōbalam, Mahānandi, Pālanka, and Parvatam.

When they had worshipped at all these holy places, they came to Parvatam. All the people of Palnāḍu arrived at Parvatam. As the Brāhmaṇ had advised, they bathed in Pātāḷaganga; they had a golden cow made; and Alugu Rāju passed through its womb. He placed his silk cloak on the shoulders of a Brāhmaṇ. As he held audience, a cobra came out of Alugu Rāju's cloak and bit the Brāhmaṇ. The Brāhmaṇ died. The sin of killing a Brāhmaṇ was upon them.

Alugu Rāju was amazed at what had happened. 'O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, our sins have not been absolved. My father did not do it; my grandfather did not do it; some distant ancestor, whom I never saw, did it. I don't know anything about it. Nobody ever told me about it. The Brāhmaṇs told us about it, and we came as they advised. We have seen all this country and have had a good time doing it, but our sin has not yet been expiated. Let us return to our own land,' he said.

They rose up from Mēdapi. They passed through the Kākirāla Valley and the Kambāla Valley. Swiftly they passed through the Elakōṭa Valley. When they had passed through the Nāyakurālu gap as well, all the people of Palnāḍu arrived in Mācerla with Brahma Nāyuḍu. Arriving there, there they remained.[53]

Brahma Nāyuḍu looked at the place with wonder. 'O Soldiers, stake out plots of land wherever you choose and of the size you desire. Later you may build on the land you have chosen,' he said.

When he had spoken, all the soldiers staked out plots suited to their needs.

Brahma Nāyuḍu prayed to his patron God, Śambhumurti.[54] As he did so, because he was Viṣṇu incarnate, a rain of gold fell for three hours on that place. Whatever riches fell on a man's plot were his own. The riches that fell in the streets and the unclaimed land were assigned to the construction of temples for Lakṣmidēvi and Cennakēśvarasvāmi. This was the plan of Brahma Nāyuḍu, Alugu Rāju, and all the rest.

As they were about to begin building the temples, the presiding deity of that city, Mahādēvi Śakti, rose up full height to the sky and said, 'Who are you, Father? I won't have any temple of Cennakēśvarasvāmi and Lakṣmidēvi in my place. I have no need for it, whatsoever!'

'Why do you say this, Śakti. Mahādēvi Śakti, I will give you a sacrificial offering. I will give boiled rice as high as a haystack and boiled millet as high as a mountain. Accept this offering,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

When Brahma Nāyuḍu had spoken, the Śakti said, 'Give me that kind of offering. But you must do one thing more. Build a small temple for me between Cennakēśvarasvāmi and Lakṣmidēvi, and name the city after me, Mahādēvi-Mācerla. If you build the city and name it Mahādēvi-Mācerla,[55] in my name, I will agree.'

Then, as the Śakti demanded, Brahma Nāyuḍu built a small shrine between the temples of Cennakēśvarasvāmi and Lakṣmidēvi. From that time on, they did obeisance to Mahādēvi Śakti. From that time to this, the city has been known as Mahādēvi-Mācerla.

Now, when the Palnāḍu people came south, they fought at Amarāvati- Dharaṇikōṭa. At that time, Ūra Bhīma Rāju's son, Uttarēśvaruḍu, was a six-month-old baby. At that time, Alugu Rāju had no offspring. He took the child that Brahma Nāyuḍu gave to him. The boy was brought up by Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, and all the rest. With the child they journeyed throughout the South country. They went to Tirupati, Śrīrangam, Kānci, Kālahasti, Upper Ahōbalam, Mahānandi, Pālanka, and Parvatam. Some days passed while they visited all these rivers and holy places. They then remained in Mācerla for some time. The boy reached the age of seven plus seven, fourteen years.[56] The child reached maturity.

One day Alugu Rāju thought, 'This child is the son of a Rāju. He is our kinsman. He has come to the age when he should be married. We must have this boy married.' This was what the elders had in their minds.

Alugu Rāju thought, 'Be he young or old, Brahma Nāyuḍu should

be consulted on this matter.' He had Brahma Nāyuḍu called to the court.

Brahma Nāyuḍu came to the court. 'O Father, what is it?' he said.

'Father, we brought Ūra Bhīma Rāju's son, the boy called Uttarēśvaruḍu, when he was six months old. We raised him to manhood. Now it is time for the boy to be married. Somewhere or the other we must talk to someone about giving him a girl, and we must have him married,' said Alugu Rāju.

Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed aloud and said, 'O Father! Alugu Rāju, listen! I have just one request.'

'What is that?'

'This boy is from Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa. We slew his father, mother, kith and kin. We brought the six-month-old boy and raised him to manhood. The boy has no father, mother, kith, or kin. He has nobody. So, call the boy to the court,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

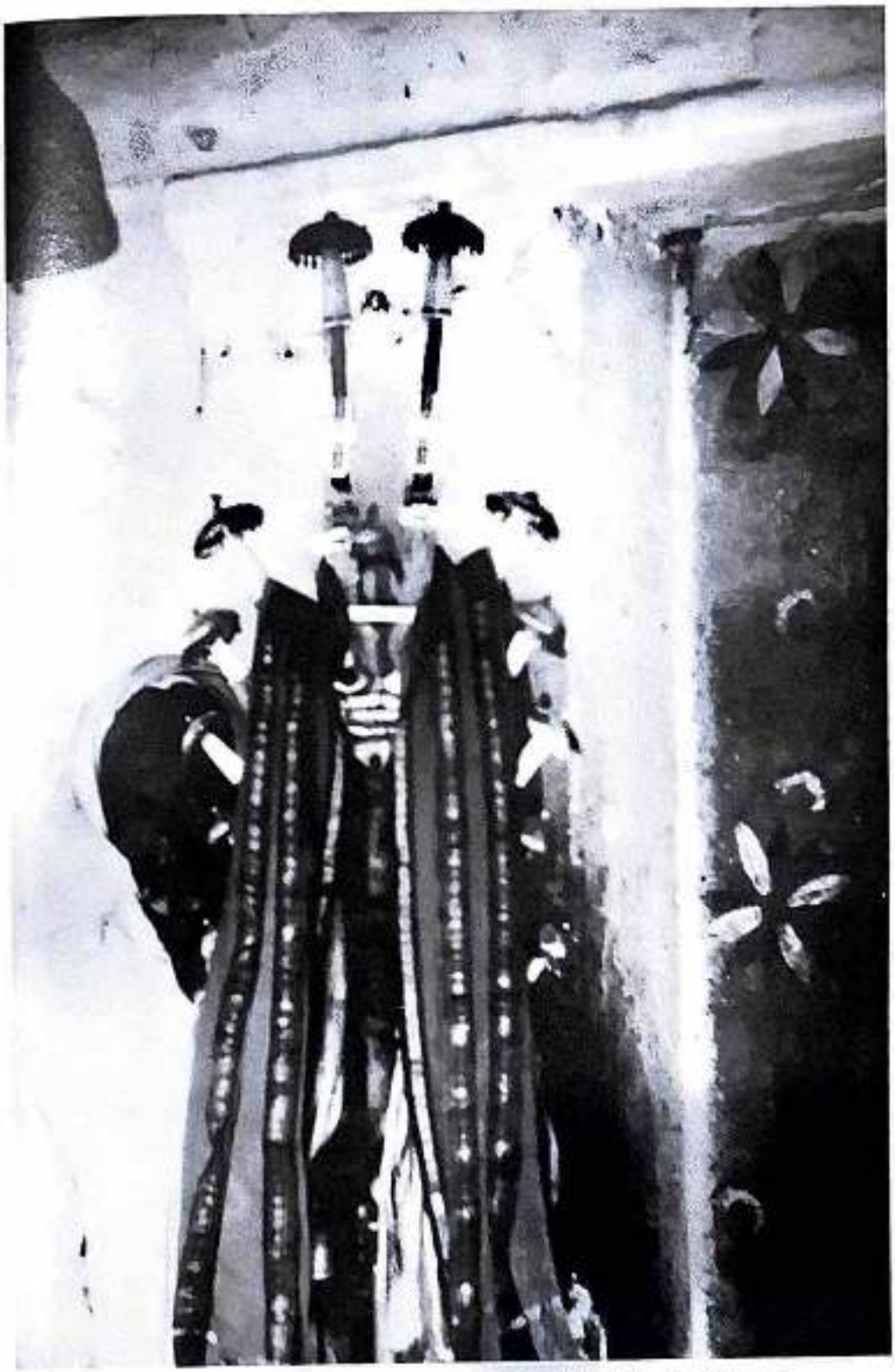
'Father, you are from Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa. A quarrel arose between your father, Ūra Bhīma Rāju, and ourselves. We slew all your people, brought you, a six-month-old baby, and raised you to manhood. Now tell us. Will you consider yourself our kinsman and be married, or will you avenge the death of your father?' they asked him.

'Father, I didn't know anything about that. I did not know that you had slain my father, mother, kith, and kin. I did not know that you had fought with them. I was just a baby. Now you have told me that I am from Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa. If you slay a tiger, take home its cub, and raise it in a cage, will that change its nature? It will not change. If you slay a cobra, put its young in a basket, and raise it up on milk and butter, will it lose its fangs and venom? O Father! Alugu Rāju, you think that you are my father. Brahma Nāyuḍu, all of you think that you are my kinsmen. But I will avenge the death of my father whom you have slain,' said the boy.

He was not a son but an enemy.

'Why should I alone remain when my father, mother, kith, and kin are all gone? I will avenge the death of my father, but I will never marry and call myself your kin.' Thus spoke Uttarēśvaruḍu.

Between the love of a blood father and the love of a foster-father, the latter is the greater. Alugu Rāju's waist bent; he fell to the earth. The Rāju's heart broke; he fell to the ground. Grievous tears soaked all of his face; from his right eye flowed a torrent of tears. 'O Father! Son! Uttarēśvara, Brahma[57] and all the Gods have not looked favourably upon us. The Gods have not looked kindly upon the people of Palnāḍu. Dēvendra[58] and the Gods have not looked kindly upon us.'



1. *Daivam* (reliquary weapon of a deified Hero) in the Temple of the Heroes—Tuḷḷūru

2. *Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyāvantuḍu* Meḍukooḍuru Cennayya (centre) and *Vaṇṇḍu*—Lāṇi

3. *Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyāvantuḍu* Āliśeṭṭi Gāleyya (with shield) and *Vaṇṇḍu* A. Venkaṭēśvarlu, A. Saidayya, and A. Tirupatirāvu—Jānapāḍu

4. Nāga Stambamu (Serpent Pillar)—Mācerla

5. Brahma Nāyuni Maṇṭapamu (Brahma Nayuḍu's Tower)—Kārempūḍi

6. *Palnāṭi Vīra Vidyavantuḍu* Ālišeṭṭi Gāleyya—Jānapūḍu

7. Ankamma (Ankālamma, Ankālapāramēśvari)—Kārempūḍi

8. Põturāju—Cintapalli

'Son, what do you have to do with them? Your father, Ūra Bhīma Rāju, was a mighty man. He fell at the hands of the men of Palnāḍu,' grieved Alugu Rāju.

'Father, why do you weep? Why do you grieve? I will avenge my father's death, but I will nevery marry and call myself your kin,' said Uttarayya.

Then Alugu Rāju leaped to his feet, 'O Father, you have no elephants. You have no camels. You have no swift horses. You have no weapons. You have no soldiers. Take a suitable number of soldiers. Take some elephants. Take some horses. Take some camels. Take some weapons. Then fight against us,' he said.

'O Father, I need nothing. I have no need of your elephants. I have no need of your camels. I have no need of your swift horses. I have no need of your soldiers. Futhermore, I have no need of your weapons. Give me just one horse to ride. Give me one weapon to wield. I will go. From somewhere I will assemble an army. Within six months I will return and fight with you,' said Uttarayya.

He took leave of his father and went to the house. 'Mother, I am going,' he said.

Vīra Vidyaladēvi's heart broke and she was sorely grieved. 'Father, why do you talk like that? There is no need for war. Listen to what I am telling you, My Son! My Little Son! Father, Uttarayya, Brahma and the rest have not looked kindly on the Palnāḍu. Dēvendra and the Gods have not looked with favour on the people of Palnāḍu. Listen to what I say, My Son,' she said.

'Mother, no matter what you say, I will not listen. I want to fight. Give me your leave,' he said.

Vīra Vidyaladēvi prepared a full meal. When Uttarēśvarudu had eaten, she said, 'Father! Son! Uttarēśvara, take this camphor *tāmbulam*. May you have the fierceness in revenge of Aśvatthāman.[59] May you have the steadfastness of Vibīṣana.[60] Be praised as a son on the earth. Be a pure son of your kinsmen. Go safely, Father, and acquire what you need. Then come and fight against the men of Palnāḍu.' Thus did the mother give her leave.

Uttarēśvara went to Brahma Nāyuḍu. 'O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I am going. Give me your leave,' he said.

'O Younger Brother! Uttarēśvaruḍu,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'What is it, Elder Brother?'

'When will you return?'

'Elder Brother, I will return in six months.'

'Good! But where will we meet?'

'To the west is Gandiganamāla and Rāvulapuram.[61] Near Rāvula-

puram is the Āraṇagaṇḍla fort. Near the Āraṇagaṇḍla fort, you and I will fight.' said Uttarēśvaruḍu.

He set forth. He passed streets full of houses; he passed the eating hall; he passed the food market; he passed the Rudra[62] temple; he passed the elephant stables ; he passed the trading streets of the Balijes.[63] Swiftly and joyfully Uttarēśvaruḍu rode along. He came to Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa, his birthplace.

No one knew him. His uncle, Gaya Bhīma Rāju, who had fled to Cintapalli fort, had returned and was ruling at Amarāvati. Gaya Bhīma Rāju looked at him with wonder and said, 'O Father, who are you?'

'O Uncle! Gaya Bhīma Rāju, I am the son of Ūra Bhīma Rāju, and my name is Uttarēśvaruḍu,' said the boy.

Gaya Bhīma Rāju laughed aloud and said, 'Boy, you were just six months old when the men of Palnāḍu came and attacked us. We had no idea who they were. They slew your mother, father, kith, and kin. I was injured, and, unable to stand against them, I fled to Cintapalli fort. Later I returned and commenced ruling this place. They took you, a six-month-old child, and brought you up to manhood. That is good.'

Gaya Bhīma Rāju rose up from the lion throne and seated the boy upon it. 'O Father! Uttarēśvaruḍu, have you come as a friend of the Palnāḍu people, or have you come as their enemy?' he said.

Uttarēśvaruḍu was surprised at the question. 'O Uncle! Gaya Bhīma Rāju, I am no friend of the Palnāḍu people. I am their enemy.'

Gaya Bhīma Rāju's heart broke. 'Listen to what I say, Father. They are mighty men. They are invincible warriors. Dēvendra and the gods cannot defeat them. Why do you want to fight with men like that? Why have you come here, Uttarēśvaruḍu?' said Gaya Bhīma Rāju, weeping inconsolably.

Uttarēśvaruḍu said, 'Uncle! Gaya Bhīma Rāju, enough! This is enough! Who are these men of Palnāḍu? I will destroy these men of Palnāḍu in a minute. Stop it! Stop it! O Uncle, call the worthy Brāhmaṇs to the court.'

Gaya Bhīma Rāju called the Brāhmaṇs to the court. The Brāhmaṇs came straightaway. 'O Father, why have you called us?' they said.

Uttarēśvaruḍu said, 'You must write letters. You must write to the following: Koṇkana, Tenkaṇa, Koyalakṣa, Kuluvu, Kuntala, Nēpāla, Bangāla, Uhalanki, Di, Tikaram, Mahipān, Mōharam, to all the Rājus of the fifty-six nations.'[64]

'Grest Soul! What should we write, Uttarēśvaruḍu?'

'Write like this: "Alugu Rāja has said that he is the only man in the world. He has announced that all the Rājus of the fifty-six nations are

women. Are we rulers of the fifty-six nations women? Is Alugu Rāju the only man in the world. My name is Uttarēśvaruḍu. I am going to war with him. If you Rājus of the fifty-six nations, knowing that Uttarēśvaruḍu is mounting an attack on Palnāḍu, have moustaches on your faces and wrath in your hearts, you will take up your weapons. If you are born in the line of Rājus, come and be my allies. . . . If you are in fact women, as Alugu Rāju has said, stay in your own lands".'

When the Rājus received the message, they assembled their forces; they preened there great sharp moustaches; they combed their tiger moustaches; their eyes reddened; they gnashed their teeth; their eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit. 'What's this? Is Alugu Rāju the only man in the world? Are we, the elephant Rājus of the fifty-six nations of the world, women? Somebody named Uttarēśvaruḍu is going to battle with him. We must go to his aid. Rise up! Rise up!' they said.

Wherever they were, the Rājus and Rājus of Rājus[65] rose up in arms. 'O Father, in the west, to the south of Mācerla, are the villages of Gandiganamāla and Rāvalapuram. There, on a great mountain, is the Āraṇagaṇḍla fort. Near the hill-fort is a field well suited for a battle-ground. Let us go and fight there, near Āraṇagaṇḍla fort,' they said.

The Rājus and emperors assembled their forces: elephants, camels, swift horses, and all the divisions of their armies. They filled the land around Gandiganamāla and Rāvalapuram. Uttarēśvaruḍu surveyed the assembled armies. The Rāju of Akalankāpuri in the east, the ruler of Oriya,[66] was a man of great wealth and many soldiers. He did not come. Uttarēśvaruḍu himself wrote a letter and called him. He came.

At the end of six months, Uttarēśvaruḍu arrived happily at Gandiganamāla-Rāvalapuram. When Uttarēśvaruḍu surveyed the armies, wherever he looked, in all the four directions, the plain was filled with fighting men. In the centre was the hill. Uttarayya looked with wonder on the scene. The armies were like the sand on the earth. The armies were as if sand had fallen on the earth and the earth could not be seen. When the wind blew against the army, it could not pass through it.[67] . . . The fighting men were like fireplace stones.[68] Thus were the armies assembled.

Uttarēśvaruḍu was very pleased. Remaining there that day and the next, he called three Brāhmaṇ heralds and asked them to write a letter. This is what the letter said: 'O Father! Alugu Rāju, as I told you I would, I, Uttarēśvaruḍu, have amassed an army in these past six months. I am now at the hill-fort near Gandiganamāla-Rāvalapuram. I am waiting for you. All of you must come and do battle with me.' When the letter was written, he gave it to the three Brāhmaṇ heralds and sent them to Mācerla. He sent them to Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa

Nāyuḍu, Brahma Nāyuḍu, the Sixty-six Heroes, the Seventy-seven Warriors, and the Seventy-two Clansmen.

The three Brāhmaṇ heralds arrived at Mācerla. When the worthy Brāhmaṇs reached Mācerla, all the men of Palnāḍu were holding court in the audience hall. The Brāhmaṇs gave the letter to Alugu Rāju and the elders. Alugu Rāju read it, laughed aloud, and said, 'My orders have been followed; my wishes are fulfilled. Though I have no son of my own, my adopted son has kept his word and protected my honour.' All the elders were very pleased. Brahma Nāyuḍu was also very pleased.

'Father, we must have the Brāhmaṇs determine the propitious time, and go to war,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

When Brahma Nāyuḍu had spoken, his younger brother, Teppalayya, stepped forward. Teppalayya had fought the battle of Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa and slain Ūra Bhīma Rāju. He had slain the little Uttarēśvarudu's father and given him to the elders to bring up.

'O Elder Brother,[69] Brahma Nāyuḍu, give me leave to fight at Āraṇagaṇḍla. Give me your permission! It was I who brought the child and gave him to you. Give me your leave,' said Teppalayya.

'O Father, you think that you are a great man, a mighty hero skilled in battle. It is true. What you say is indeed true, but Uttarēśvaruḍu is a very great man. There is no comparison between you and Uttarēśvaruḍu. He is the master of the war discus. The boy was born of Īśvara's boon. He will never fall by your hand. You are no match for him. It is for me, and no one else, to kill him. I am destined to do it. No one else is destined to do it.' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Each of the Sixty-six Heroes, the Seventy-seven Warriors, the neighbouring kings, and the tributary monarchs said, 'Elder Brother, give me the chance. Give me the battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla.'

'None of you will derive any pleasure out of it. He is a master of the war discus; he is a mighty man; he is skilled in battle; he is full of manliness. I am destined to fight this battle,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Brahma Nāyuḍu realized that he could not prevent them. 'Boy! Teppalayya, take your soldiers and go. But do not fight with him. Raise the Palnāḍu banner over the hill-fort. I will come. Do not fight until I arrive. If you do, you will surely die,' he said.

Teppalayya took leave of his mother and father. He took his Gōsangi soldiers: Śimbuni Muta wielding the double-edged sword; brave Tāvula Pōtu Nēḍu; Gandham Oppi Nēḍu; Sūgaṇḍi, the wrestler who fights what he sees. With hairlocks, garlands of flowers, cymbals, great drums, and bells, he took 24,000 Gōsangi soldiers.

With his army, Teppalayya arrived at Āraṇagaṇḍla. He looked at

the great host assembled there. The armies completely surrounded the mountain; there was no way to gain access to it. 'How can I get to the mountain with these armies surrounding it? If I ask them to give me passage, they will refuse. How am I to plant the green and red banner on the hill-fort?' he thought.

That night Teppalayya spent four watches camped at that place. In the morning he rose up. 'They have not given me leave to pass, and I do not have permission to fight against them,' thought Teppalayya and wondered what to do.

Meanwhile, Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, and all the elders had set out to join Teppalayya. They wondered what had happened to him and they decided to go and find out for themselves. They came with great festivity, banners flying. Brass drums, hand drums, lutes, . . . double drums, and gongs sounded as they marched along. Chowries, flags, and solar banners waved. They raised umbrellas and banners. Very joyfully they went along.

Teppalayya saw them coming and wondered at the sight. 'What is happening? It looks as if my father and the elders are coming to give me leave to join the battle,' he thought.

Believing this to be their reason for coming, Teppalayya called his 24,000 Gōsangi soldiers. 'Hey there! Soldiers! Start the battle!' he said.

The 24,000 Gōsangis fought a terrible, terrible battle against Uttarēśvaruḍu. Teppalayya, taking his weapon in his hand and yelling 'Gōvinda!',[70] charged the army and began to fight. They fought like two bulls mauling, like rutting elephants churning the earth, like hills clashing together. They fought like Rāma and Rāvaṇa, like Vāli and Surgrīva duelling, like Karṇa and Arjuna clashing together.

Teppalayya was a mighty man; he was skilled in battle. He combed his sharp moustache, his eyes reddened; he preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened; he gnashed his teeth; his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit.

As Teppalayya fought against the army of Uttarēśvaruḍu, the sky turned red; the heavens shook; the earth became a burying ground; comets filled the heavens; . . . Teppalayya was a mighty warrior, a warrior skilled in battle. He was filled with manliness.

They fought and raged while heads fell to the earth. Heads lay gaping on the earth. Chest to chest fought the spirited men. Men . . .When they fought like this, seventy-two pieces of fat flesh were scattered about along with the blackened heads. They fought and raged while heads fell on the ground.[71]

As they fought this terrible, terrible battle, wherever one looked

were headless bodies. Wherever one looked were rivers of blood. Wherever one looked there were nothing but skulls. Terrible was the battle that Teppalayya fought.

As he fought, Teppalayya was wounded with all manner of weapons. Wounded, red blood gushed forth from his eyes. He had golden needles brought and sewed his eyelids open. He fought on, waging a terrible battle. At last he battled his way to the hill-fort. On top of the hill, he planted the banner of Palnāḍu.

When he had raised the banner, Teppalayya fell on the earth to the west of it. His blood became rivers; drops of blood soaked his clothing. Unable to stand up under the many wounds, Teppalayya fell to the west of the flag and died.

Twelve thousand soldiers died. Twelve thousand more were wounded. Many of Teppalayya's soldiers were slain. Many more were wounded. About three-fourths of the soldiers remained alive.

Then Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, and the elders saw what had happened. 'What a battle Teppalayya has fought. He did not heed the words of Brahma Nāyuḍu. O Father! Teppalayya! Where are you, My Son? Where are you, My Son! Father, you slew the mighty Ūra Bhīma Rāju and his kith and kin. But Ūra Bhīma Rāju had a son named Uttarēśvaruḍu. Now you have died at the hands of that same Uttarēśvaruḍu. Father! Father! Where are you, My Son! Teppalayya!' they said, grieving and grieving.

They lifted up their heads, looking bravely for their son. 'O Son! Where are you, Father?' They rolled severed heads aside and looked for Teppalayya. They looked everywhere, but they did not find him. Wherever they looked were heaps of heads. Wherever they looked were nothing but bodies. Wherever they looked were rivers of blood.

Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, the elders, and the twelve hill quellers[72] mounted the hill to the fort. When they got there they found Teppalayya. He lay on the earth to the west of the banner.

Uttarēśvaruḍu saw them coming. 'O Soldiers, the man who came yesterday was a hill queller. Today the Rājus and ministers are coming. Give them battle,' said Uttarēśvaruḍu.

The embassy of Rājus and ministers approached Alugu Rāju and Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu. The Rājus attacked. Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, and the twelve hill quellers were struck by weapons and fell.

The father, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, said, 'O Father! O Son! Brahma Nāyuḍu, we did not get your leave to fight. But you did not tell us not to fight. Therefore, we have fought at the hill-fort. We are mortally wounded at the hands of Uttarēśvaruḍu. Many of Teppalayya's soldiers have fallen; Teppalayya himself is slain. I am wounded by

weapons. The Rāju is also wounded. If you come before the morning star rises it will be well. If you do not, we will leave our bodies and our vital breath will enter the temple of Cennakēśvarasvāmi. Brahmayya, that is where we will go.'

Writing this in a letter, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and Alugu Rāju sent it to Mācerla. The messenger arrived in the middle of the night. Even before his arrival, a dream came to Śīlamma,[73] the mother of Brahma Nāyuḍu. In the dream she was told to say: 'O Son! Brahma Nāyuḍu, your father has suffered a grievous injury on the battlefield at Āraṇagaṇḍla. Your father, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, is dying. The mighty Rāju is also dying. Teppalayya is dead. Twelve thousand of Teppalayya's soldiers have been wounded and twelve thousand have been slain.'

When she had this dream, Śīlamma, Brahma Nāyuḍu's mother, awoke with a start and sat up. She wept many grievous tears; pearl-like tears soaked her whole face; her waist bent and she fell to the earth. Regaining consciousness, she rose up and said, 'Nāyuḍu! Brahmayya! My Son! Narasimhamūrti![74] Purifier of the World! My Son! Protector of the World! Protect us, Bhargava,[75] O Rāma of Rāmas. Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, your father and the Rāju have been slain at the hands of the young Uttarēśvaruḍu. The mighty Teppalayya, the valorous man of arms, has fallen.'

When she had the dream, she called Brahma Nāyuḍu. He is beyond description;[76] he is the seer of the human world; he is Viṣṇu incarnate. He rose up and said, 'O Mother, why are you weeping?'

'Father! Your father, the Rāju, and Teppalayya are in grave straits on the Āraṇagaṇḍla battlefield. I just had a dream,' she said.

'O Mother, don't give it any more thought. These are the hot spring months of Caitra and Vaiśākha,[77] and there are no leaves on the trees. Everyone has dreams at this time of year.' Thus did Brahma Nāyuḍu reassure his mother.

At that instant, the courier came with the message. He gave the letter to the great soul, Brahma Nāyuḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu read the message and said, 'O Son! Kannama, prepare to go to Āraṇagaṇḍla. Brother-in-law! Sunkari!'

'What is it, Brother-in-law!'[78]

'Prepare to go to the Āraṇagaṇḍla battlefield.'

The three took leave of their mother and set out for the battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla. Brahma Nāyuḍu marched along. Kannama was fully accoutred for war with a sharp broadsword and a sharp moustache. He wore rings in his ears and warrior's girth. . . . As he marched along, he carried a six-cubit broadsword in his left hand and a twelve-cubit sword in his right hand.[79]

Brahma Nāyuḍu came without any weapon. Brahma Nāyuḍu, the incarnation of Viṣṇu, carried only the tusk of a boar under his arm. When he got to the Āraṇagaṇḍla battlefield, wherever he looked were nothing but decapitated trunks. Wherever he looked were piles of heads. Wherever he looked were rivers of blood. It was terrible, most terrible.

Brahma Nāyuḍu climbed the hill to the hill-fort. The vital breath of his fathers, Alugu Rāju and Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, had departed to Mācerla. Brahma Nāyuḍu ordered their bodies to be taken there and laid in the Cennakēśvarasvāmi temple.

When Brahma Nāyuḍu mounted the hill to the fort Uttarēśvaruḍu observed him and said, 'Hey, soldiers! The man who came the day before yesterday was a hill conqueror. Yesterday the Rāju and minister came. Today Viṣṇu incarnate, Brahma Nāyuḍu has come. You have my permission to attack.'

A Rāju sat on his elephant. When the mahout[80] jabbed the elephant, it raised its trunk, squealed, 'Geeeeeee! Geeeeeeeeee! Geeeeeeeeee!' and charged Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Seeing that he was being charged by an elephant, Viṣṇu incarnate, Brahma Nāyuḍu, gathered himself together to meet the charge. He took the boar's tusk in his hand, boldly raising it to the sky. Releasing the tusk, he drove it through the elephant's body. Then grabbing the elephant's trunk, he slew the elephant, mahout, and Rāju. Thus did Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate. But the tusk was broken in pieces. Brahma Nāyuḍu was left with neither weapon to wield nor staff to carry.

Wave after wave of Uttarēśvaruḍu's soldiers charged Brahma Nāyuḍu. He was weaponless and at their mercy. Nārada Brahma guardian of the three worlds, was looking on. 'What a fool this Brahma Nāyuḍu is. He hasn't even looked in my direction,' he said.

Nārada Brahma, protector of the three worlds, was on his way to Vaikuntha.[81] He passed like a great elephant, lord of the lotuses. Brahma Nāyuḍu looked up in the sky. When he looked up, Nārada Brahma motioned to him, indicating his intention of giving the staff he carried in his hand. Realizing this, Brahma Nāyuḍu grabbed the trunk of an approaching elephant. He spun it around and hurled it high into the sky. When it came down, it fell on an elephant below. Both the elephant from above and the elephant below fell on the battlefield.

Wave after wave of soldiers charged him. Saying, 'O Lord! Nārāyaṇa,[82] where are you?' Brahma Nāyuḍu did not fall. He grabbed the soldiers, and spinning them around, he hurled them into the sky.

They landed on top of the soldiers below, and both fell on the battlefield.

In this way, Brahma Nāyuḍu fought without weapons, using only his fists. The three ages, Krita, Tretā, and Dvāpara trembled, 'Gadagadagadagadagada!!

'What can this mean? In the Krita Age Īśvara and the Gods fought a battle, but our chariot was not spun around. In the Trēta Age Rāma and Rāvaṇa fought, but our chariot was not spun about. At the end of the Dvāpara Age Kripa battled with the Pāṇḍavas, but our chariot was not spun about. Now it is the end of the Dvāpara Age and the beginning of the Kali Age, and our chariot is spinning about.[83] What can be the reason? Top over bottom, bottom over top, top over bottom, bottom over top, it is spinning wildly about. Our heads are upside down. What can it mean? Who can it be,' wondered the thirty-three crores of Gods. But none of the thirty-three crores of Gods was able to explain.

'We can't understand it. But perhaps our son, Nārada Brahma, can, he is engaged in overseeing the three worlds. It will be good to call him,' they said.

The thirty-three crores of Gods called Nārada Brahma. 'What's this, Nārada? they said.

'What is it, Great Souls?'

'What does this mean? In the Krita Age the gods fought, and our chariot did not spin around. In the Trēta Age Rāma and Rāvaṇa fought, and our chariot did not spin around. In the Dvāpara Age Kripa fought with the Pāṇḍavas, and our chariot did not spin around. Men like Dharma Rāju, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, Drusa,[84] Dhriṣṭadyumna, Duryodhana, Droṇācāri, Kripācāri and Aśvatthāma battled, but our chariots did not spin about.

'In the Trēta Age, Rāma and Rāvaṇa battled. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva, Angadā, Gaya, Gavaya, Gandhamādanā, Suṣēna, Nīla, Pram, and Kapi were the seventy-two monkey warriors who mounted the attack on Laṇka. In Lanka were Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Atikāya, Mahakāya, Dhūmrākṣa, Īruvupakṣa, and Kadgu[85] who fought against the invading monkeys.

'In the Krita Age, Īśvara and the thirty-three crores of Gods fought against the sixty-six crores of Demons, and our chariot did not spin around. Why is it spinning around now?' asked the Gods.

'Great Souls! Fathers! Viṣṇu, Brahma, Śankara, it is now the end of the Dvāpara Age and the beginning of the Kali Age. Brahma Nāyuḍu of Palnāḍu, son of Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, in appearance a man but in truth a full God, is fighting without a weapon,' said Nārada Brahma.

'What did you say? Even the thirty-three crores of Gods fought with weapons. Rāma and Rāvaṇa fought with weapons. Kripa and the Pāṇḍavas fought with weapons. Now you tell us that he is fighting without any weapon. You say he is a man in appearance? How, then, can he be a full God? Never mind that. Go and see if he is under the influence of a wife or another woman,' they said.

Nārada Brahma assumed the form of a very beautiful woman. He landed in front of Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Seeing her, Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed heartily and said, 'O Woman, you look like my mother. Did you notice that I became thirsty as I fought? And did you come to give me milk from your breasts? Look at these elephants! Look at these corpses! Look at this flood of blood! Get out! Get out!'

Nārada Brahma disappeared. 'He is not under the influence of a wife nor is he influenced by other women. He is a *parama-bhagavatōttamudu*[86] said Nārada Brahma.

'O.K., Nāraḍa, go and tell him that we thirty-three crores of Gods will be pleased to give him a weapon. Tell him that, and bring him back with you,' they said.

Nāraḍa Brahma went in his own form, not assuming another form. 'O Brahma Nāyuḍu, you have pleased the thirty-three crores of Gods. They request that you come so that they can give you a weapon,' he said.

'Father! Great Soul, if I come now, they will say, "Brahma Nāyuḍu is unable to fight, and he has fled." There is Uttarēśvaruḍu and here am I. When the battle is over, I will come and get the weapon,' he said.

Nāraḍa Brahma went back and reported to the thirty-three crores of Gods. Then Brahma took the discus in his hand. He hurled it so that Uttarēśvaruḍu could not see Brahma Nāyuḍu, and Brahma Nāyuḍu could not see Uttarēśvaruḍu. From that time to this, that place has been known as the Hill in the Discus. It is called Cakrālagōlam.[87] Neither man could see the other. Brahma Nāyuḍu left the battlefield.

The thirty-three crores of Gods were assembled. 'O Brahma Nāyuḍu,' they said.

'What is it, Father?'

'We are pleased with the way you are fighting. We are the thirty-three crores of Gods; ask for the weapon of whomsoever you choose.'

Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed aloud and said, 'O Father, all you thirty-three crores of Gods are blemished. I wouldn't think of touching your weapons.'

Brahma, Viṣṇu and Īśvara bowed their heads in shame. 'What do you mean by that, Brahma Nāyuḍu? You were without a weapon, and

we called you to give you one. You say we are blemished? That's fine, but you must explain what you mean by that,' they said.

'What is my blemish?' said Brahma.

'O Brahma, I will tell you how you are blemished. Thinking that your wife, Sarasvati,[88] is a very beautiful woman, you keep her in your mouth. You are blemished! I will not accept your weapon,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'O Viṣṇu, shall I tell you what your blemish is? Considering your wife Lakṣmidēvi to be very beautiful, you keep her on your chest.[89] You are blemished. I will not accept your weapon,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'O Īśvara, shall I tell you what your blemish is? You are married to Pārvati, but you also keep Ganga[90] in your hair. I will not accept your weapon,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'O.K., Brahma Nāyuḍu! That is enough! You have told us about our blemishes, and that is enough. But ask a weapon of whomsoever you will. That is the reason we have called you. Ask for whatever you want, and we will give it to you,' said the Gods.

'Īśvara has a son named Vīrabhadra. He is only slightly blemished. He was not born of a womb; his birth was supernatural and not of a womb. He was born in a pot. He was born of Pārvati's perspiration which was caught in a pot. He was not born of his parents' intercourse.[91] I will accept a weapon from his hands.

'I will tell you where the weapon is. In the Krita Age, Īśvara needed a weapon for destroying the demons. The Gods called Viśvabrahma[92] and said, "O Father, Viśvabrahma."

' "What is it, Father?"

' "We need a weapon, Viśvabrahma."

' "I will make it. What sort of weapon should it be" he said.

' "It must not be placed in a forge; it must not be blown with bellows; it must not be taken with wood; it must not be beaten with a hammer. It must have sixty-four blades and thirty-two prongs. It must have poison tips. It must be in the form of a trident.[93] It must not be made of a plant that grows on the earth; it must not be made of a tree that grows in the forest. It must not have a tip forged by a blacksmith; it must not have blades hammered by a smith. That is the sort of weapon we want," said the Gods.

' "All right, I will do it," said Viśvabrahma.

'He went home, but he had no idea what to do. "How can a weapon be made without being melted in a forge? How can it be done without blowing it with a bellows? How can it be taken up hot in the hands without using wood? How can it be forged without a hammer?" he

thought, but the great soul had no idea how to proceed. He lay down on his bed and went to sleep.

'Viśvabrahma's daughter, Sayyādēvi, said, 'Father, I have prepared water for your bath. Dinner is nearly ready. I have made you a fine meal. Take your bath and eat, Father."

' "O My Daughter, your meal is golden, but I have agreed to do something for the thirty-three crores of Gods."

' "Never mind, I will take care of it," said Sayyādēvi.

'She prepared a bath for her father. When he had had his bath, she removed his wet clothing and gave him fresh dry ones. She finished cooking the meal and served him. When her father had eaten, she gave him *tāmbūlam* and put him to bed.

'Sayyādēvi brought gold dust and poured it on the earth. Standing on one leg, she called on Sūrya,[94] saying, "Girinmayūrē gaganē payōdharē lakṣāntarē bhānujalēca padmam dvilakṣasōman kumudōtpalānām snēyājabhandō, nagurāju dūram."[95]

' "Lakṣāntarē" means that Bhānuḍu, the sun, is 100,000 *yojanas*[96] away and that is why he is so hot.

'When she called on Sūrya, he came and struck the earth. The rays fell on the gold dust and melted it. "Mother, this is the end of my work," he said. "I am not capable of cooling it. 'Dvilakṣasōman kumudōtpalānām.' 'Dvilakṣa': the moon is 200,000 *yojanas* away. Call Candruḍu!"

'When Candruḍu struck the earth, the weapon was cooled. Viśvabrahma took the weapon and gave it to Īśvara.

'Īśvara and the thirty-three crores of Gods slew the sixty-six crores of Demons. Īśvara then gave the weapon to his son, Vīrabhadra. Vīrabhadra wielded the weapon for a time and then tied it to a banyan tree. A great anthill grew over it,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

The thirty-three crores of Gods said, 'Hey! Vīrabhadra, bring your weapon and give it to Brahma Nāyuḍu.'

Vīrabhadra said, 'Who is this human? Is this mere mortal capable of wielding my weapon?'

Somewhat irritated, he went to the weapon and wrenched it out of the anthill. 'Take it! Take it!' he said.

Brahma Nāyuḍu looked at the weapon with amazement. 'What do you mean by this, Vīrabhadra? Do you think that I will take the weapon in that condition? It is covered with filth. Take it to the ocean and wash it clean. You also take a bath. Wrap it in a silk cloth, hand it to me, and I will take it. I won't touch it like this,' he said.

'He may be a human, but he is an accomplished sage,' thought Vīrabhadra.

He went to the ocean and took a bath. With ashes he completely cleaned the weapon. Then Vīrabhadra grew to the height of a palmyra tree.[97] 'Take it! Take it! Take it, Brahma Nāyuḍu,' he called as he approached.

'It looks as if Vīrabhadra does not recognize my Godliness. He thinks that I am a mere man,' thought Brahma Nāyuḍu, and he grew to the height of two palmyra trees.

'Bring it here! Bring it here! Bring it here, Vīrabhadra,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

When Brahma Nāyuḍu took hold of the weapon and pulled, he pulled all the strength out of Vīrabhadra's arms. Vīrabhadra fell to the earth in a swoon.

'O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I thought you were a mere human,' he said.

'O Vīrabhadra,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu and laughed aloud. 'So you thought I was only a man. If you thought I was just a man, I will take your heroism and I will take your name. In the Kali Age, in the month of Kārtika, I will establish the Festival of the Heroes. I will protect you.'[98]

Īśvara was pleased and gave him his trident. Durga, Bhairavi,[99] was pleased and gave him the twelve-cubit weapon with the six-cubit hilt.

Taking the three weapons, Brahma Nāyuḍu took leave of the thirty-three crores of Gods and returned to the Āraṇagaṇḍla battle. He gave the twelve-cubit weapon with the six-cubit hilt to his son, Kannama. The trident, which Īśvara had given, he gave to his brother-in-law, Sunkari.

'Brother-in-law, you are not to fight in this battle. Kannama, you also must not fight. I must test the capacity of this weapon,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu, and climbed up to the hill-fort.

Seeing Brahma Nāyuḍu mounting the hill, Uttarēśvaruḍu said, 'Look there! Brahma Nāyuḍu has returned! You may attack!'

Wave after wave and column after column of troops advanced on Brahma Nāyuḍu. As they charged, Brahma Nāyuḍu brandished the weapon that Īśvara had given him. He brandished it before the approaching soldiers. A hundred thousand staggered; a hundred thousand felt pangs; a hundred thousand suffered terribly; a hundred thousand were burned. Four hundred thousand soldiers were slain. In every direction men fell scorched on the grass. Unable to bear the heat, the other soldiers ran away.

'O Son! Kannama, all these Rājus and warriors are fleeing. Go to Rācakoṇḍa,[100] cut thorn bushes, and make a corral. When it is finished, drive all these Rājus into it,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Kannama did as Brahma Nāyuḍu commanded him. He cut thorn bushes, built a corral, and locked all the fleeing Rājus in it.

Brahma Nāyuḍu and his brother-in-law, Sunkari Rāma Nāyuḍu, remained on the battlefield. All the soldiers had fled. Uttarēśvaruḍu, the discus master, was left alone to challenge them. He vowed to behead both Brahma Nāyuḍu and Sunkari Rāma Nāyuḍu with one blow.

Uttarēśvaruḍu advanced with his discus ready to make good his vow. Brahma Nāyuḍu did not see him coming. Sunkari looked on amazed. 'Oh, Oh! Uttarēśvaruḍu is advancing with his discus ready. If he hurls it both of our heads are as good as gone. If I warn my brother-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, of Uttarēśvaruḍu's approach, he may think that I am not capable of handling the situation. He may ask me to explain why I have called on him while I have Īśvara's trident in my hand,' he thought. He was caught in a dilemma.

Uttarēśvaruḍu had come very close. 'Never mind! Never mind! Let it happen as it will,' said Sunkari Rāma Nāyuḍu. He hurled the trident, the gift of Īśvara.

The trident struck Uttarēśvaruḍu and beheaded him. His head fell to the ground. The headless trunk rose up and passed through the Kākirāla valley and the Kambāla valley. It came to the country of Elanāḍu; that is the country here around Kārempuḍi. The villages are Cinna Koḍamaguṇḍla and Pedda Koḍamaguṇḍla. Even to this day, the headless Uttarēśvaruḍu stands there, neither speaking nor seeing.[101]

The war was completely over. Brahma Nāyuḍu and Sunkari Rāma Nāyuḍu went to Rācakoṇḍa; they went to the corral. 'O Rājus,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'What is it, Great Soul?'

'Is the victory mine or is it yours?'

'Sir, we are the ones who fled. You are certainly the victor.'

'If I am the victor, then I must have tribute. This is the tribute you must pay: twenty *varahās*[102] for every man who carries a spear, twelve *varahās* for every man who wields a dagger, three *varahās* for every man who carries a gun,'[103] said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

When the Rājus had paid the tribute he demanded, Brahma Nāyuḍu released them all. The ruler of Akalankāpuri in the east was a man of many soldiers and much wealth. But he had no money with him. He did have a pearl necklace in his possession. He gave the necklace to Brahma Nāyuḍu and gained his freedom. Taking the necklace with him, Brahma Nāyuḍu returned to Mācerla along with Sunkari Rāma Nāyuḍu and Kannama.

Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, and the elders were in Mācerla. Brahma Nāyuḍu took cow dung and purified the earth; he made a lotus of the five colours. In the lotus he laid Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and Alugu Rāju. With a water pot he sprinkled water over them and spoke a word of power[104] in their ears. When he touched them with the necklace,[105] they rolled from one side to the other. A second time he spoke an appropriate word of power in their ears and sprinkled water over them in the name of Cennakēśvara and Śankara. Alugu Rāju, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, and the rest rose up.

Brahma Nāyuḍu took the necklace and went before his brothers, Peddana Bāḍa Rāju, Sūr Nīdu, and Malli Nīḍu, and his father, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu. Who should be given the necklace? That was the question. He couldn't decide who to give it to.

His father, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, said, 'Father, you are four brothers and you have four wives. No one will agree to relinquish his claim. But among us there is only one child. Your son, Bālacandruḍu, is the only child. Bālacandruḍu has a wife named Māncāla who is beautiful and perfect in every way. If all of you agree and are happy about it, I think we should put the necklace around the neck of that little girl. She is the daughter-in-law of us all.'[106]

They took the pearl necklace and put it on Māncāla's neck.

Brahma Nāyuḍu defeated Uttarēśvaruḍu and that is the end of the battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla.

Notes

1 *Āraṇagaṇḍla*: a fort near the villages of Gaṇḍiganamāla and Rāvulapuram in Vinukoṇḍa Tāluk, Guṇṭūr District, about 15 miles south-southeast of Mācerla.

2 *Uttarēśvaruḍu*: a young prince of Amarāvati-Dharaṇikōṭa, who is raised by the Palnāḍu elders after they kill his father in battle.

3 *Ganga and Yamuna*: rivers originating in the Himālayan ranges. *Tungabhadra*: a tributary of the Kriṣṇa, it flows through Karnātaka and western Andhra Pradesh. *Narmada*: Central India river emptying into the Arabian Sea. *Silēru*: empties into the Sabari, a tributary of the Gōdāvari and forms part of the A.P. – M.P. border. *Girija*: lit. 'mountain born', an unidentified river. *Gautami*: another name for the Gōdāvari, which flows through A.P. *Trōyam*: probably a hyperform of *tōyam* (water). *Kollēram*: a large shallow lake in the Kriṣṇa–Gōdāvari delta.

4 *amada*: a distance of *c.* 8–10 miles.

5 *Kārtavīrya Arjuna*: a Haihaya (the lineage of the Rājus of Palnāḍu) patriarch. See Dowson, pp. 151–2 for an account of stories about him. *Jambanipuri*: perhaps Jabalpur in the ancient Cēdi homeland of the Haihayas, now in MP.

6 *Kāmboja*: a country now lying in Pakistan and southern Afghanistan. *Viśadvārigāvari*: (unidentified).

7 *Pālamācāpuri*: (unidentified), sometimes equated with Jabalpur. Cf. note 5.

8 The geography here is of course fantastic.

9 *The patron God . . . their patron God*: Cf. above p. 78.

10 *Father*: used as a form of address for any male in this epic, but more commonly only for an elder or a young boy.

11 *sacred grass: darbha*.

12 *Dasarā festival*: the festival day marking the end of the Nine Nights, an annual festival in honour of Durga.

13 *banner pole: dhvaja stambha*, it usually refers to the tall pole bearing a stylized flag, of wood and bells, that is placed in front of Hindu temples.

14 *Hari Rām*: a Vaiṣṇava chant.

15 *Lakṣmidēvi*: the wife of Viṣṇu, she is here the wife of his manifestation, Cennakēśvarasvāmi.

16 *Brāhmaṇs . . . Śūdras*: the fourfold Hindu division of society. Here, as elsewhere in the epic, it simply means all the people.

17 *Śrīrangam* and *Kānci* are in Tamilnadu. The remainder are in A.P., except *Pālanka* which is unidentified. *Parvatam* is the same as Śrīsailam.

18 *Pātāḷaganga*: a sacred bathing-place in the Kriṣṇā River at Śrīsailam (Parvatam). It is now flooded by the Śrīsailam project.

19 *jammi tree*: (*mimosa suma*) a tree that is reverenced throughout the epic. In the *Mahābhārata* the Pandavas tie their weapons on this tree which is also worshipped on Dasarā.

20 This often repeated description of the army is memorized and spoken very rapidly. My rendition may contain errors. *Gōsangi* is another name for 'Mādiga', a caste of Telugu untouchables. They are leather workers.

21 A list of warlike peoples, all of whom postdate the epic time period. *Cikkuls* and *Cinguls*: may be added for sound value. I have not identified them.

22 *Śūbēdar*: originally the governor of a province (in Hindustani), here it means a military officer. *Ābēdār* is perhaps a creation to rhyme with *Śūbēdar*.

23 *Kāceli*: (unidentified). *Kāśi*: Benares.

24 In addition to being crazy, Gollas are thought to be stubborn.

25 *Pēr Nīḍu and Teppali Nīḍu*: two of Brahma Nāyuḍu's younger brothers.

26 *Gaya*: the famous Buddhist city in present-day Bihar. Offerings of oblations to ancestors at this place are considered particularly effectual.

27 The Ganga does not, of course, flow through Gaya, but the word 'ganga', referring to any water, may be intended.

28 *Durga*: Goddess, usually equated with Pārvati or Kāḷi.

29 *Kiṣkindha*: the mountain, home of Vāli and Sugrīva of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Nothing more is known of this flower.

30 *pūja*: worship, offerings, reverence, obeisance, homage, etc.

31 *Kanaka Durga*: the popular Goddess at Bejavāḍa, A.P., on the left bank of the Kriṣṇā River.

32 One hundred and one *Śaktis*: This is the traditional number of the Śaktis.

33 The names of the powers in order are: Karpari, Kapilākṣi, Vyāghra . . . , Vyāḷāngi, Mutyāla, Kadupunoppularaṭṭa, Kātēri, Tongicūpulamāri,

(*Dobbalājōri*.?). Nandulatalli, Naṭṭintimāri, Eddula llavēlpu, . . . gonga, . . . Vārāhi (female pig).

32 *Woman: amma*, a term applied to any female and more specifically meaning 'mother'.

35 Velamas in the epic always give their lineage in terms of their Rāju. The Haihayas belong to the lunar, as distinct from the solar, line. Mallikārjuna is the name by which Śiva goes at Śrīsailam. The mention of Pedda Malidēva illustrates the discrepancy that occurs when a formulaic passage (i.e. the lineage) is used without respect for time. Malidēva Rāju will not be born for several years.

36 Bejavāḍa is famous for its ancient rock-cut temples and caves.

37 *Vāli and Sugrīva*: the monkey brothers in the *Rāmāyaṇa* who waged war against each other. *Karṇa and Arjuna*: two heroes of the *Mahābhārata*, they are the greatest warriors of the Kauravas and Paṇḍavas respectively.

38 *Brass drums . . . carried aloft*: a formulaic description which seems more important for its sound value than its content.

39 *Dharaṇikōta*: near Amarāvati, it is now a village in Guṇṭūr District, A.P. It was once an important capital of the Sātavāhanas. During the epic period, it was the capital of the Kōṭas. Amarāvati is an important Buddhist archaeological site, but it is also important today for the temple of Amarlingasvāmi (Śiva).

40 Cf. note 39.

41 *Munugōḍu*: a village in Sattenapalli Tāluk, Guṇṭūr District. It is near the banks of the Kriṣṇā near Amarāvati.

42 *Teppali Nīḍu*: Gāleyya mistakenly says Pēr Nīḍu but I have corrected instances when he confuses the names.

43 *Reḍḍi*: an important agricultural caste in Palnāḍu and the Telugu country. The term has also designated the village headman, etc. See M. Somasekhara Sarma, pp. 70–5 for a historical discussion of the term.

44 *Rāju*: actually Teppalayya is a Velama by caste. I am not sure whether this is a slip on Gāleyya's part or whether he is using it in a broader sense because the Reḍḍi believes Teppalayya to be a Rāju.

45 In a non-cash economy it is far more important to have grain than any amount of cash.

46 The moustache is a symbol of manliness and heroism. Even today the old men of Palnāḍu are proud of their great moustaches. The preening of moustaches in like situations is also common in Telugu cinemas.

47 *Ūra Bhīma Rāju*: Bhīma was a popular name among the Kōṭas, and most of the Dharaṇikōṭa Rājus of the time used it in their names.

48 *Seventy-two Clansmen*: refers to the divisions of the Velama community, of which Gāleyya gave me a long list in conversation. The relationship between these and the Seventy-seven Warriors (cf. p. 142 note 6) is not clear.

49 *Cintapalli*: borders Kārempūḍi on the north-east.

50 *Īśvara*: Śiva.

51 *Īśvara . . . Great Lord*: epithets of Śiva.

52 *Koṇḍavīḍu*: an important medieval hill-fort in Narasarāvupet Tāluk, Guṇṭūr District. The other places mentioned, with the exception of Kanapilliki (unidentified), are all in Cīrāla Tāluk, Guṇṭūr District.

53 The following information is taken from a discussion I had with Gāleyya while we were taping 'The Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla'. Apparently he forgot to

repeat the section when he resumed singing as he usually did when he summarized a portion ahead of time. 'The real name of Mācerla is Mahādēvipuram: the place ruled by Mahādēvi Śakti. Brahma Nāyuḍu had to make the Śakti his patron deity in order to remain there. At that point the river changes direction (from flowing north to flowing west) and this shift in direction makes it a very sacred spot. Lakṣmi Dēvi and Cennakēśvarasvāmi, noting this, refused to go on. Though they had been to all the holy places of the South, this was the most sacred spot they had seen. The river flows west, mounting the high ground (which it does appear to do). The river flows uphill and that makes it a sacred spot.

'The women bathed and their indigo garments became pure white. Taking this as a sign that their past sins were expiated, Lakṣmi decided to remain there. When the party started to move on, the Gods would not budge.'

54 Note that though Brahma Nāyuḍu has strong Vaiṣṇavite associations, he also recognizes Śiva as his patron God.

55 This story substitutes a Sanskrit name for a Telugu one. The place is always called simply 'Mācerla' in popular usage. Many Telugu names have been Sanskritized in this manner, but the Sanskrit names seldom gain popular acceptance.

56 *seven plus seven, fourteen years*: seven is a particularly auspicious number, but the addition also indicates the seven years of childhood plus the seven years of schooling.

57 *Brahma*: the deity who controls destiny.

58 *Dēvendra*: Indra, the king of the Gods.

59 *Aśvatthāman*: the son of Droṇa and Kripā of the *Mahābhārata*. He slew Dṛiṣṭadyumna who had killed his father.

60 *Vibīṣana*: the brother of Rāvaṇa in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He refused to fight against Rām and eventually joined him.

61 *west*: actually the places mentioned are east of Mācerla, but they are west of Gāleyya's home and Kārempūḍi. They are in Vinukoṇḍa Tāluk, Guṇṭūr District.

62 *Rudra*: epithet of Śiva.

63 *Balijes*: an important trading caste of the Telugu country.

64 *Koṇkana . . . fifty-six nations*: the nations of the world are always said to be fifty-six. In this list, only Koṇkana, Nēpāla, and Kuntala are listed among the puranic fifty-six countries in D. C. Sircar, pp. 89–114. I have not been able to identify Koyalakṣa, Uhalanki, Di, Mahipān, and Mōharam. Tenkaṇa is the homeland of Nanne Cōḍa, a 12–13th-century poet. Its location is open to question. The remainder are recognizable places in India.

65 *Rājus of Rājus: rārājulu*, emperors.

66 *Akalaṇkāpuri*: probably Puri in Oriya (Orissa).

67 *When . . . through it*: translation is conjectural. The tape is not clear.

68 *fighting men . . . fireplace stones*: i.e. scattered in great abundance.

69 Gāleyya says 'younger brother' here, but 'elder brother' is meant, and I have substituted the latter.

70 *Gōvinda*: Kriṣṇa. Here it is used as a battle-cry. Elsewhere, it appears as a Vaiṣṇavite chant.

71 *Chest to chest . . . fell on the ground*: This portion is not clear enough to assure an accurate translation.

72 *twelve hill quellers*: no information about these.

73 Note that dreams foretelling events in this epic always come only to women.

74 *Narasimhamurti*: the man-lion avatar of Viṣṇu.

75 *Bhargava*: probably Paraśurāma, an avatar of Viṣṇu.

76 *He is beyond description*: This is a loose rendering of the sense of the phrase 'mūḍāmaḍamuccaṭa ēḍāmaḍa ekāntam', which literally means: '(after) three *amadas* friendship, (after) seven *amadas* intimacy'. This is a way of suggesting that what is to follow is a long and involved story that is more than can be told at the time.

77 *Caitra and Vaiśākha*: the lunar months April–June, the hottest and driest part of the Telugu year.

78 *Brother-in-law*: Gāleyya says 'uncle' (māma) but this is a slip of the tongue and 'brother-in-law' (bāva) is meant.

79 *Kannama . . . in his right hand*: an obscure description of Kannama's battle dress. I have omitted what I could not follow or translate.

80 *mahout*: elephant driver.

81 *Vaikuntha*: Viṣṇu's heaven.

82 *Nārāyaṇa*: Viṣṇu.

83 *Krita Age . . . chariot is spinning about*: According to the epic, there is a great battle in each of the four ages. In order, the battles are the following: the battle between the Dēvas and Asuras, the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the great battle of the *Mahābhārata*, and the battle of Palnāḍu. Apparently the Gods are thought of as riding in a great chariot.

84 *Druṣa*: misconstrued or unidentified.

85 *Iruvupakṣa and Kadgu*: misconstrued or unidentified.

86 *paramabhagavatōttamuḍu*: the superlative of a title used by noble Vaiṣṇavas or followers of the Kṛiṣṇa sect.

87 *Cakrālagōlam*: 'The Circular Hollow'.

88 *Sarasvati*: the wife of Brahma, she is also the Goddess of speech and learning.

89 *Lakṣmidēvi . . . on your chest*: Reference to a story in which Lakṣmi takes the form of a birthmark on Viṣṇu's chest.

90 *Ganga*: Also a wife of Śiva, but of lower status. Śiva once caught the Ganga in his hair to protect the earth when the river descended upon it.

91 *Īśvara has a son . . . parents' intercourse*: Other versions have Virabhadra emanating from Śiva's mouth. Dowson, p. 358.

92 *Viśvabrahma*: Viśvakarma, the builder of the Gods.

93 Compare this description of the weapon with the photograph of weapons worshiped in Kārempuḍi and elsewhere.

94 *Sūrya*: the sun personified as a God.

95 *Girinmayūrē . . . dūram*: This is a defective Sanskrit *sloka* (verse) for which there seems to be no correct original. It does not make any sense in the context, except as explained by Gāleyya below. The *sloka* appears in almost the same form in Bangōre ed., *Tātācārla Kathalu* (collected by C. P. Braun), Madras: M. Seshachalam and Co., 1974, pp. 86–90. In that context it is recognized as a defective *sloka* and the fact that no one knows the 'correct' original solves a scholarly debate over how to correct it. Since common people and scholars alike repeat it in the same form, it must be right.

96 *yojana*: a unit of linear measure, equal to about twelve miles.

97 *grew to the height of a palmyra tree*: a common expression in Telugu, it is probably not meant literally.

98 *So you thought . . . protect you*: This section is confused and unclear. Gāleyya seemed somewhat confused as to how to tie in this particular incident involving Vīrabhadra with the establishment of the Festival of the Heroes. I hope that the translation approximates the meaning.

99 *Bhairavi*: epithet of Pārvati or Śakti.

100 *Rācakoṇḍa*: A village in Mārkāpur Tāluk, Ongōlu District, it is west of the Āraṇagaṇḍla battlefield.

101 Gāleyya explained that someone had placed a Hanuman head on this image, but that it was really Uttarēśvaruḍu. I examined the Hanuman figure, but it seemed an ordinary representation of the monkey God. There may be another Uttarēśvaruḍu temple in the village, however.

102 *varahā*: a gold coin.

103 *gun: tupāki*. This weapon, which was unknown in the area during the actual epic period, is mentioned only twice in the epic.

104 *word of power: mantra*.

105 *When . . . with the necklace*: unclear, translation is tentative.

106 *But among . . . daughter-in-law of us all*: Bālacandruḍu is not yet born at this time unless this decision about the necklace was put off several years. An illustration of the timelessness within the epic time period.

Story 5

The Story of Candavōlu[1]

The Rāju of Candavōlu was named Davula Śanka Mahārāju. He had two mighty retainers named Accika Maccīru and Piccaka Maccīru. The retainers had two birds with steel beaks. Every morning the Brāhmaṇs rose up, put sacred rice on their heads, and set out to collect alms. When they did so, the retainers released the birds. The birds ate the sacred rice off the Brāhmaṇs' heads and foreheads.[2] They were not able to shoo them away. If the Brāhmaṇs had killed the birds, the retainers would have taken it as a challenge to battle and attacked them. Unable to stand this treatment any longer, the Brāhmaṇs went to the men of Palnāḍu who were camped at Amarāvati. Though they wore their sacred threads, they had no sacred rice on their heads. When the men of Palnāḍu asked them who they were, they said that they were Brāhmaṇs. But the men of Palnāḍu did not believe them, even though they wore the sacred thread, because they had no sacred rice on their heads. Then the Brāhmaṇs explained the situation in Candavōlu and the men of Palnāḍu went to their assistance. But the Rāju of Candavōlu chose not to fight with the people of Palnāḍu. He made peace with them and gave them his daughter as a bride. This was Alugu Rāju's second wife.[3]

Notes

1 Though both Gāleyya and Cennayya said that this story is a regular part of the tradition, neither was willing to try singing it. Both told it to me in a very brief form. Gāleyya said that the story was not in much demand and that therefore he was out of practice for singing it. A longer account is found in Śrīnāthuḍu, *Palanāṭivīracaritra*, pp. 27–9.

2 The Brāhmaṇs are probably Smārtas, since only Smārta Brāhmaṇs use the sacred rice in the marks they make on their foreheads. The Smārtas may worship either Viṣṇu or Śiva.

3 *second wife*: Mailamā Dēvi.

Story 6

The Birth of Ankamma*

Nārada Brahma is insulted in the Śaivite city of Kalyāṇ. The birth of Ankālamma and her attendants. Pārvati sends her to Kalyāṇ to demand offerings. Ankālamma (Plate 7) attacks the cattle herds and forces the herdsmen to give her milk. Ankālamma enters the city and cheats the women and children. The Rāju has her beaten. She visits affliction on the city. The Rājus are incarcerated in Ankālamma's flower garden. Ankālamma tells the wives what sacrifice must be performed. The Rājus are released. Ankālamma is brought into the city. Komma Rāju sacrifices a flour sheep with a flour knife. He chants 'Gōvinda'.

Gajapati Rāju is ruling the magnificent city of Kalyāṇ. The seven Rājus of the city have prohibited the people from worshipping Śakti.[1] They are devotees of Śiva and they give all their praise and offerings to Īśvara. The Rājus wear *lingas* on their bodies, and even the trees and mortars of the city bear *lingas*.

One day Nārada Brahma goes to Kalyāṇ and passes through the streets crying, 'Hari! Hari! Hari!' The Rājus are surprised, thinking that some devotee of Viṣṇu has come. As Nārada Brahma passes by, the people close their doors and shut him out. Displeased, Nārada Brahma leaves the city and goes to Pārvati's court.

Bowing to Pārvati, Nārada Brahma asks her to tell him who are the mother and father of the Kali Age. Pārvati tells him that she herself is the mother and Īśvara is the father. Nārada Brahma agrees that Īśvara is the father, but he questions whether Pārvati can be called the mother when no one worships her. Before disappearing, Nārada tells Parvati of his experience in Kalyāṇ. He tells her how the seven Rājus do not permit the worship of anyone but Śiva.

One day Śiva mounts his bull, Nandi, and is about to visit his devotees in Kalyāṇ when Pārvati approaches him. Hearing that he is going to Kalyāṇ, Pārvati asks him if his devotees are hers as well. Śiva tells her that since she wears neither the *linga* nor the ash on her

*Detailed summary.

forehead,[2] she will not be honoured in Kalyāṇ. If she goes, she will be treated disgracefully. He goes on alone.

Pārvati is surprised to hear this. As Īśvara leaves, she is sexually aroused and her body is covered with perspiration. Gathering the perspiration, Pārvati pours it on a tree. The tree splits open, allowing the perspiration to drip into the serpent world. There it falls on to the serpent jasmine flower and gives birth to the nine crores of Siddhas;[3] the one hundred and one Śaktis; Bhairava, known as Pōtarāju; and Ankāladēvi with red eyes, body, hair, and throat. When she is born, Ankālamma swoons.

Regaining consciousness, Ankālamma cries out to her mother, Pārvati, asking for food. She demands offerings of palm beer, cannabis, liquor, hydromel, intoxicants, and meat. Not having any of these, Pārvati advises Ankālamma to repair to Kalyāṇ where the Rājus have prohibited the worship of Śakti. There Ankālamma should, with the assistance of the one hundred and one Śaktis, force everyone to bow down to her.

Ankālamma, followed by Bhairava and the one hundred and one Śaktis, goes to the great herd of cattle that belongs to the Rājus of Kalyāṇ. Donning the guise of an old woman, she approaches the cowherds who are watching the cattle. Claiming to be very thirsty, she asks them to slake her thirst. But the cowherds note that she does not wear the *linga* and fear that the cattle will sicken at her touch. They drive her away from the corral.

The cowherds drive Ankālamma away. But by her power she returns before they do and again asks them to quench her thirst. Casting stones at her, they again drive her away. Again she returns. This time the head cowherd orders her to be dismembered with axes and burned in a fire.

The cowherds attack, and Ankālamma weeps and falls to the earth. Then she angrily throws ashes over the cowherds and cattle alike, casting a spell. The cattle cannot see the cowherds, and the cowherds cannot see the cattle. They swoon.

Ankālamma sets out for Kalyāṇ with the one hundred and one Śaktis and her younger brother, Pōtarāju. On the way Ganga Bhavāni[4] blocks her path, complaining that though the Yādavas were born first Ankālamma has slain them. Ganga demands humans. Ankālamma complies with the demand. Turning back, she brings the cowherds and their cattle back to life. Again she asks the cowherds to slake her thirst. This time they agree to do so. The Śakti drinks pot after pot and jar after jar of milk, endeavouring to quench her thirst. At last, when she has consumed all the milk and curds, Ankālamma gives an enormous

belch and declares herself satisfied. Then, taking the powers with her, she goes to Mount Mahēndra.[5]

On Mount Mahēndra, Ankālamma uses her power of illusion to plant a jasmine garden and a sugar-cane field. She leaves twelve armed attendants to guard it. With her are the one hundred and one Śaktis and Pōtarāju. Making a golden cradle, she sits in it while the Śaktis rock her and sing cradle-songs.[6]

On the third day, deciding that it is time to go on to Kalyāṇ, Ankālamma assumes the beautiful form of a young woman, dressed lavishly in the finest clothing. With a basketful of tamarind leaf-buds on her arm, she enters the gate of Kalyāṇ. The gatekeeper accosts her and refuses her entry because she wears none of the marks of Śiva. But he is overcome by the Śakti and she enters the city.

In the form of a young woman, Ankālamma goes about the streets hawking tamarind buds. She calls out that the buds are Śiva's and that they will give milk to dry mothers and offspring to the barren. The Rāju's wives hear the call. Thinking that she is some devotee of Śiva, they trade precious pearls for the tamarind buds. But, by her sleight of hand, Ankālamma causes the buds to return to her own hands. The women scold and beat her, and she disappears.

The Rājus order the gatekeeper to explain why he let the woman into the city. He is very frightened.

On the third day, Ankālamma returns with a basketful of fruit. Again, having overcome the guard, she enters the city and commences hawking fruit. Children gather and trade diamonds for the fruit. But the fruit that looked so good and sweet in Ankālamma's hands becomes dirt in the hands of the children. The children beat her.

Gajapati Vīra Sōma Rāju receives a report of what has transpired and orders the gatekeeper to bring Ankālamma before him. Weeping, Ankālamma calls on her patron God, Cennakēśvara, asking that the Rāju be beaten. After quarrelling with the Rāju, Ankamma returns to Mount Mahēndra. From there she sends the one hundred and one Śaktis against the city.

The Śaktis cause all manner of diseases to both man and beast in the city. Insects attack the Rāju's flower garden, and the sugar-cane fields are destroyed. Ankālamma is responsible for all of this.

The Rājus are devotees of Śiva, but they can find no flowers for worship. All seven of the Rājus take baskets and go out in search of jasmine flowers. But there are none. At last they arrive at Ankamma's garden. Finding flowers there, they start to pick them. But the Śakti sees them and sends Pōtarāju to beat the Rājus.

The Rājus are incarcerated in the garden while terror reigns in the

city. The seven Rājus have only one son. That night he is stricken with delirium, vomiting, chills, and fever. The seven mothers are at a loss what to do in the face of this disease that ravages the city. Faced with the terrible situation, and without their husbands, the women weep and call on Īśvara. But the Rājus do not return from their trip.

Ankamma hears them sobbing and dons the guise of a beautiful young Erukula[7] fortune-teller. Entering the streets, she offers to tell fortunes. The Rājus' wives ask her to reveal the city's fate. Then Ankālamma, in the guise of the young Erukula maiden, tells them all that has happened: the humiliation of Nārada Brahma, the birth of Ankamma, and the reasons why the one hundred and one Śaktis have been loosed on the city.

She tells the Rājus' wives what must be done: Ankamma must be brought from Mount Mahēndra in a great procession and placed on a five-coloured lotus in a tent. A story-teller must come and sing the *Epic of the Palnāḍu* and the 'Birth of Ankamma'. The five and the nine sacrifices[8] must be offered and a nightlong vigil kept. Finally, a lamb must be brought and worshipped. Raṇa Komma Rāju,[9] son of the seven Rājus, must take a sword and kill the lamb as a sacrifice. When this is completed, prosperity will return to the city.

The Rājus' wives protest that their husbands will never consent to such a sacrifice while they are alive. No one in the city even takes red garden greens or red onions.[10] Ankālamma, disguised as the Erukula fortune-teller, suggests an alternative. They must fashion a lamb of red sorghum flour and a knife of white sorghum flour. Then Komma Rāju must sacrifice the lamb with the flour knife. This alternative pleases the Rājus' wives.

Ankāladēvi returns to the place where Pōtarāju is beating the Rājus, and she orders him to release them. She promises Pōtarāju that they will give him offerings equal to those given by the matchless Heroes of Śivanandi fort. For three days the Rājus have been beaten. Now they return to their grieving wives, asking what they must do.

The wives tell the Rājus what the Erukula girl has told them. As expected, the Rājus refuse to allow the sacrifice. But when they hear the alternate sacrifice, they agree. At an auspicious time, they bring Ankālamma to the city in a great procession. After placing her on the throne, the whole city, which had heretofore called only on the name of Śiva, begins singing 'Gōvinda!' The houses are decorated. After hearing the story of Ankālamma's birth, a night-long vigil is kept.

At dawn, according to the Erukula's directions, they make a sheep and knife of flour. Komma Rāju, the son of the seven Rājus, takes up the knife. He is possessed and cries 'Gōvinda!' Then, lifting the flour

knife, he sacrifices the flour sheep. The flour sheep and the flour knife become real. Red blood gushes forth, flowing down like rivers.

Seeing what has happened, the Rājus call on Īśvara. Īśvara, pleased with their devotion, appears on Nandi with his trident in his hand. Descending to the middle of the bazaar, he picks up the Rājus with his trident, seats them on Nandi, and departs for Kailāsa.[11]

The Great Śakti Ankāladēvi sees them leaving and is about to release her bloody weapon into the air. But Raṇa Komma Rāju stops her, telling her to forget about them. What does she need with them? He, Raṇa Komma Rāju, will serve her. He takes her on his shoulder and promises to stop calling on the name of Īśvara as the Rājus have done through the ages. He will begin chanting 'Gōvinda.'[12]

This is the end of the birth of Ankālamma.

Notes

1 W. T. Elmore, *Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism* (Lincoln, 1915), pp. 90–3, gives an account of the birth of Ankamma that shares many features with this one. Both stories refer to seven Rājus. Here they are in Kalyāṇ; in Elmore's account they are in Korlapāḍu. Since nowhere else are seven Rājus mentioned as reigning in Kalyāṇ, this account must be taken as a popular story of Ankamma adapted to local needs. The story also resembles, in many respects, a story given by H. Whitehead, *The Village Gods of South India* (Calcutta, 1921), pp. 126–38. In that account the seven Rājus are in Dēvagiri.

2 *linga . . . ash on her forehead*: The wearing of the *linga* and *vibhūti* (ash) are two distinguishing marks of the followers of Vīra Śaivism or Lingāyatism.

3 See the jasmine flower and Siddhas in the 'Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla', p. 258.

4 *Ganga Bhavāni*: Ganga, the wife of Śiva. Ganga's position in the Kāṭama Rāju tradition is similar to that of Ankālamma in the Palnāḍu tradition. V. Prabhakarasastri, ed., *Kāṭamarāju Katha*, p. 1, and Elmore, *Dravidian Gods*, pp. 100–3.

5 *Mount Mahēndra*: A mythological mountain. At least two mountains in India go by this name. One is in the Ganjam District of Orissa and the other is in the Tiruṇelveli District of Tamiḷnāḍu. D. C. Sircar, pp. 10 and 167. It is not clear whether it is one of these that is meant or whether some other local mountain goes by the same name.

6 On the Kārempūḍi battlefield there is a stone cradle or swing for Ankamma.

7 The Erukulas are a tribe who are often itinerant but sometimes settled on the outskirts of villages. The women are usually fortune-tellers.

8 *five and nine sacrifices*: I have not discovered what this refers to.

9 *Raṇa Komma Rāju*: The same Rāju who follows Brahma Nāyuḍu to Palnāḍu after the defeat of Śivanandi Fort and plays such an important role in subsequent events there.

10 *red garden greens or red onions*: are associated with meat eating.

11 *Kailāsa*: Śiva's dwelling on a peak in the Himālayas.

12 Be this as it may, Komma Rāju always appears as a follower of Śiva in subsequent episodes. The story is only very loosely connected with the historical framework of the period as found elsewhere in the epic.

Story 7

The Story of the Deaf-Mute Rāju*

The rulers of Kalyāṇ and Dēvagiri. Rāvidēva Rāju's concern for the welfare of his deaf-mute son. Vankidēvamma agrees that he should marry Muvvarēkha. Mūga Rāju remains with his in-laws. Though his wife's intercessions, Mūga Rāju is made whole. The birth of Śivasingāla Rāju. Ignoring his wife's warnings, Mūga Rāju goes to Dēvagiri. Mūga Rāju slays his father and brothers by mistake and kills himself. Muvvarēkha prepares to mount the pyre. Her parents promise to raise the child and to marry him to Śivanāgāla Dēvi.

The ruler of Kalyāṇ[1] is Gajapati Rāju. Kalyāṇ is a magnificent city surrounded by richly decorated walls of iron, brass, and bronze. The houses have compound walls of gold. In the city are mansions, meeting halls, markets, and women's quarters. Swans swim in the parks that are surrounded by flower gardens and sugar cane fields.

The ruler of Dēvagiri[2] is Rāvidēva Rāju. He has four sons. They are Cinna Vallabha Rāju, Pedda Vallabha Rāju, Bāla Vallabha Rāju, and the deaf-mute son, Mūga Malidēva Rāju.[3] It is time for the boys to be married. Rāvidēva Rāju is deeply grieved, worried that no one will be willing to marry their daughter to his deaf-mute son.

Pedda Vallabha Rāju sees his father weeping and asks what is troubling him. Rāvidēva Rāju expresses his fear that his youngest son will never be able to marry. Hearing this, the eldest son assures his father that he will see that the little fellow gets married.

The ruler of Kalyāṇ is Gajapati Sōma Rāju.[4] His wife is the younger sister of Rāvidēva Rāju of Dēvagiri, the [potential] mother-in-law of Pedda Vallabha Rāju, Rāvidēva Rāju's eldest son. Her daughter is named Muvvarēkha. Pedda Vallabha Rāju offers to take his deaf-mute brother, Mūga Malidēva Rāju, to Kalyāṇ to marry the boy to his paternal aunt's daughter,[5] Muvvarēkha. When Pedda Vallabha Rāju tells his father of this plan, Rāvidēva Rāju is very pleased and forgets his grief.

Mūga Rāju is seven years old, and Muvvarēkha is six years old.

*Detailed summary.

Pedda Vallabha Rāju writes to his aunt, Śri Vankidēvamma, requesting that the two should be allowed to marry. Śri Vankidēvamma is delighted with the plan and consents at once.

A propitious time is determined by the Brāhmaṇs, and a great party sets out from Dēvagiri. Rāvidēva Rāju and his three elder sons arrive in Kalyāṇ with the boy, Mūga Rāju. The wedding is celebrated for five days, and the party remains in Kalyāṇ for a full sixteen days. When Rāvidēva Rāju is about to leave, he asks that Mūga Rāju remain in his mother-in-law's house. Both the mother-in-law and the father-in-law agree to the plan, and Rāvidēva Rāju and his party return to Dēvagiri.

Mūga Rāju remains with his in-laws. When the boy reaches the age of fourteen years and the girl attains puberty, Gajapati Sōma Rāju and his wife, Vankidēvamma, set an auspicious time for the consummation of the marriage. Muvvarēkha is adorned with fine raiment and goes to the bedroom where her husband is sleeping. She begins to wash his feet with rose water, but when he awakens, she soon realizes that her husband is a deaf-mute.[6]

Then Muvvarēkha calls on Śiva by his many names. She asks him to grant her a boon. She wants him to cause her husband to gain the use of his ears and voice. Śambhumūrti appears, and he grants her the boon she asks. He then disappears, and the couple spend the night happily together.

Muvvarēkha conceives; Śivasingāla Rāju is born. When his son is six months old, the elders suggest to Mūga Rāju that he should visit his fathers and brothers in Dēvagiri. Mūga Rāju came to Kalyāṇ when he was only seven years old, and he has never returned to his home. He knows nothing of his people and nothing of Dēvagiri. He decides that he should visit his ancestral home.

When Mūga Rāju tells his plan to his wife, Muvvarēkha asks him not to go. The baby is being nursed. When he hears his father's words, he kicks his legs, flails his arms, and cries out. Muvvarēkha, taking this as a sign that something ill will happen, warns her husband not to go. But Mūga Rāju is determined to go, even without his wife's leave. Muvvarēkha does not continue to oppose her husband.

Mūga Rāju assembles his army of elephants, camels, horses, and foot soldiers. He takes leave of his wife and in-laws and sets out for Dēvagiri. Many instruments play as he marches joyfully along. He passes out of the city with the joyful expectation of seeing his parents and relatives. After three days, he comes to the vicinity of Dēvagiri. As he arrives the sun sets and he commands his troops to pitch the tents. They spend the night near the boundaries of the city.

At dawn Mūga Rāju commands his troops to raise the red banners.

He does not know that the city is his birthplace, Dēvagiri. Meanwhile, Pedda Vallabha Rāju, Mūga Rāju's eldest brother, looks out from the city and concludes that some Rāju has come to wage an unjust war against him. He does not think that anyone would come and raise a red banner unless they were wanting war.

Pedda Vallabha Rāju is enraged. He musters his forces and has the war drum beaten. He takes his broadsword, dagger, arrow, club, blowgun, axe, and battleaxe, and he advances to meet the attack.

Neither side knows the identity of the other. Mūga Rāju meets the three Vallabha Rājus and they fight a terrible battle. Mūga Rāju beheads his three elder brothers. Rāvidēva Rāju sees the death of his sons, and having nothing further to live for, he prepares for battle. Father and son fight a fierce battle. The father does not fall, and the son, being in the prime of life, does not fall. At last Mūga Rāju triumphs, throwing his father to the ground. He holds his dagger to his father's throat.

As Rāvidēva Rāju lies on the ground with Mūga Rāju's dagger at his throat, he calls on Paramēśvara, saying, 'I am the father of four sons. Some stranger has come and slain three of them. That same stranger has fought a terrible battle with me. My unfortunate son Mūga Rāju alone remains of my offspring. If that son were here with me, I would not be in such a state.' Even as the words leave his lips, Mūga Rāju beheads him.

No sooner does Mūga Rāju behead his father than he reflects on the words he has heard. He realizes that he has slain his father, brothers, kith, and kin. He has no desire to live any longer. Putting his weapon to his own throat, he decapitates himself and falls on his father's feet.

The body of Mūga Rāju is carried to Kalyān. Muvvarēkha is told all that has happened. When she hears the news, she cries hysterically. She had known that something ill would befall him. She swoons and cries out, wondering what will become of herself and her son. She blames Īśvara for the grief she has suffered. She calls her father, Gajapati Vīra Sōma Rāju, and tells him to prepare the funeral pyre.

Gajapati Vīra Sōma Rāju assembles everything that is required for the funeral pyre: sweet-smelling sandalwood, oil, castor oil, and bottles of clarified butter. Muvvarēkha is dressed in the finest clothing and jewels. She wears diamond rings and is adorned with gold. She comes as the bride of war, decorated with tumeric.

Muvvarēkha cries. She weeps for her son who is only six years old. She is not concerned for herself, but the boy will have no one to care for him. Even if someone should adopt him, she knows that no one will marry their daughter to a boy who has no parents and no relatives. She

decides to take her son to the pyre with her so that the two of them will go together, and no one will suffer.

As Muvvarēkha approaches the pyre, her father observes her and is amazed. He warns her against killing the child. It is the equivalent of killing venerables, cows, and Brāhmaṇs. He has a three-month-old daughter. Her name is Śivanāgāla Dēvi. He promises to give his daughter in marriage to Śivasingāla Rāju.[7]

Muvvarēkha refuses to give the boy to her father without a promise from her mother that she will give her daughter in marriage. When Gajapati Vīra Sōma Rāju approaches his wife, Śrī Vankidēvamma, she promises to give her right breast to the boy and her left breast to her daughter. She promises to have the boy educated and to give him her daughter as a bride. Śrī Vankidēvamma swears before the thirty-three crores of Gods: Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. She swears before Ganga and Ankālamma. She swears before the Goddess Earth and the Goddess Sky. After hearing the oaths, Muvvarēkha gives Vīra Sōma Rāju her son, Śivasingāla Rāju.

Muvvarēkha approaches the pyre and calls on her patron God, Śambhumūrti. The killer raises his sword; the Brāhmaṇs, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras look on; the fire rages; Muvvarēkha leaps into the inferno. Oil and clarified butter are thrown on to the fire, and it rages even higher. They take Śivasingāla Rāju home where he is nurtured by Vankidēvamma.

NOTES

1 *Kalyāṇ*: The twelfth-century capital of the Western Cālukyas and, for a time, of their usurpers the Kālacuris. The period of Kālacuri rule in Kalyāṇ coincides with the main events of the epic. Now in the Bīdar District of Karnāṭaka state, it is about 200 miles north-west of Palnāḍu. Kalyāṇ is the sacred city of the Vīraśaiva or Lingāyat form of Śaivism. The origins of this movement are contemporary with the events of the epic and Kālacuri rule.

2 *Dēvagiri*: Now Daulatābād near Aurangabād in Maharashtra. Dēvagiri was a very important city in the Deccan throughout the medieval period, and was ruled by the Yādavas who were feudatories of the Western Cālukyas and Kālacuris during the time of this epic. The period is an obscure one, but there were marital ties with the rulers of Kalyāṇ. See A. C. Altekar, 'The Yādavas of Seuṇadeśa' in *The Early History of the Deccan*, pp. 518–24. I have not succeeded in making any clear identification of the members of the royal family named in the epic with those known to historians. Dēvagiri is about 175 miles north-north-west of Kalyāṇ.

3 *Mūga Rāju*: the *Mute Rāju*. 'Mūga' is the Telugu word for 'mute'.

4 *Sōma Rāju*: a popular name among the Kālacuris and Cālukyas of Kalyāṇ.

5 *paternal aunt's daughter*: cross cousin marriage is the ideal in the Telugu country.

6 After a child marriage, the bride and groom often have no contact with one another until puberty when the marriage is consummated.

7 This marital alliance is permissible because the relationship between Śivasingāla Rāju and his mother's younger sister, Śivanāgāla Dēvi, is all on the maternal side. The arrangement is not common, but so long as the paternal side is not involved, it is not considered incestuous, even though they are nursed by the same mother, etc.

Story 8

The Story of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi*

Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi are brought up together. Vankidēvamma breaks her promise, choosing another husband for Śivanāgāla Dēvi. Śivasingāla Rāju's attempted self-sacrifice. Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi escape. Indrakīlādri Rāju and Vīra Sōma Rāju pursue. The defences of Śivanandi Fort. The children are given protection in the fort. Pōtarāju reveals the secret of the fort. The besiegers seek out Brahma Nāyuḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu appeases Pōtarāju and overcomes the fort's defences. The plunder of the Śivanandi Fort. Brides given to the Malidēva Rājus. The Rājus of Kalyāṇ accompany Brahma Nāyuḍu to Mācerla.

Muvvarēkha mounts the pyre and her mother, Śrī Vankidēvamma, nurses the baby, Śivasingāla Rāju. The boy is suckled at the right breast, and the girl, Śivanāgāla Dēvi, is suckled at the left breast. The two grow up together. When the boy is seven and the girl is six, they are give a Śaivite preceptor. They go to school together. At home they eat from one plate; they sleep on one bed; they are childhood friends.

At school Śivanāgāla Dēvi calls on Sarasvati. When Sarasvati appears, the girl requests that Śivasingāla Rāju become her husband and she his wife. The children grow in the knowledge of reading, the defensive arts, and the heroic arts. They reach the age of seven plus seven, fourteen years.

People begin to talk and gossip. The boy has reached puberty and so has the girl. They have no modesty or shame. They eat from the same plate and sleep on the same bed. Word of what the people are saying reaches the Rāju. He goes to his wife and tells her that it is time to have the children married.

Vankidēvamma refuses to honour the promise that she made before all the Gods when Muvvarēkha mounted the pyre. Vīra Sōma Rāju reminds her of her promise, but she is adamant in her refusal. She says

*Detailed summary.

that she will give her daughter to her younger brother, Indrakīlādri Rāju.[2]

Gajapati Sōma Rāju is deeply grieved. He sits on the throne, neither eating nor drinking. Meanwhile, Vankidēvamma sends word to her brother to come and marry the girl. Indrakīlādri Rāju, son of Gaḍera Sōmendra Rāju,[3] sets out for Kalyāṇ with a great procession. He rides dressed as a bridegroom.

In Kalyāṇ, Vankidēvamma instructs her daughter to break off relations with the boy. She tells her to stop going to school. Her marriage will take place within a week.

When news of all this reaches Śivasingāla Rāju, he is broken-hearted. He calls on Śiva, asking him what to do. He does not know where to turn. He goes to school and sits in class, but his hand will not write. When he tries to read, the words will not come. So he leaves the class with the excuse that he has to go out to urinate.

When he gets out into the street, Śivasingāla Rāju does not know which direction to go. He has no mother or father. In no direction is there anyone to support him. He is completely helpless. At last he decides to go south to the Śiva temple where his (potential) father-in-law, Gajapati Sōma Rāju, worships. He decides, since he is going to die very soon anyway, that he must tear out his tongue before Śiva and die. He goes to the temple and prepares to rip out his tongue.[4]

Meanwhile, Śivanāgāla Dēvi escapes from her confinement and runs to the bedroom. Śivasingāla Rāju is not there. She goes to the school. When she cannot find him there either, she swoons. She weeps, asking who will be her support when he is gone. She starts to the east, north, and west. Then she realizes where he has gone. She knows that he has gone to pull out his tongue at her father's Śiva temple.

At the Śiva temple Śivanāgāla Dēvi tells Śivasingāla Rāju that he is committing a sin. But Śivasingāla Rāju begs her not to think of him as her husband. He tells her that her husband, Indrakīlādri Rāju, is on his way. He tells her to leave him.

But Śivanāgāla Dēvi will not abandon Śivasingāla Rāju. Insisting that he is her husband, she send him to the bedroom. Her mother asks where she has been. To this question, the girl responds that she has been at her aunt's house reading from the *Bhārata, Bhāgavata*, and *Rāmāyaṇa*.[5] Vankidēvamma warns her daughter to stay away from the Rāju, for tomorrow will be her wedding day.

In the morning Śivanāgāla Dēvi goes to see Śivasingāla Rāju. Her mother finds out and begins to beat her. Śivasingāla Rāju is heart-broken, he weeps and swoons.

Śivasingāla Rāju goes to school. Again he can neither read nor write. He excuses himself and leaves. Again he does not know which way to go. There is no one in the east, north, or west to support him. He resolves to go and decapitate himself before Śiva in his father-in-law's temple.

Meanwhile, Gajapati Sōma Rāju sits downcast on the throne. The promise that he made to Muvvarēkha has been broken. He does not eat; he does not sleep; he does not perform his daily Śiva *pūja*.

Śivasingāla Rāju enters the temple. He takes the great shears[6] in his hand; he prays to Śiva; he prays to Ankālamma. He places his head between the blades and his foot on the trip cord, and he calls on Śiva. If he jerks his leg, he will be decapitated.

Śivanāgāla Dēvi eludes her mother's guard, but the boy is nowhere to be seen. She asks the teacher where he is. The teacher tells her that Śivasingāla Rāju has gone to urinate. Śivanāgāla Dēvi is very concerned for his life. She starts out to the east, north, and west. Then she realizes that he must have gone south to the Śiva temple. She runs to the temple. But when she arrives, his head is already between the blades. His foot is in the trip rope.

Realizing that he will trip the shears if he sees her, Śivanāgāla Dēvi conceives of a plan. Quickly she disguises herself as her father, Gajapati Vīra Sōma Rāju. Śivasingāla Rāju sees her coming and thinks Gajapati Sōma Rāju is coming to perform *pūja*. Fearing that he will spoil his father-in-law's *pūja* and be guilty of treason against Śiva, he puts aside the shears with the intention of taking them up again after Vīra Sōma Rāju is gone.

Śivanāgāla Dēvi rushes in and grabs his hand, asking what will become of her if he dies. Śivasingāla Rāju rebukes her with harsh words. He reminds her of her approaching marriage with Indrakīlādri Rāju. But the girl will not be put off. She takes him back to the house and asks him to remain in the bedroom.

Vankidēvamma demands to know where her daughter has been. The girl promises to stay away from the Rāju and says that she will be reading in her aunt's house. That evening she is to be married, and her mother is busy with all the preparations for the wedding.

While the mother is preoccupied with the wedding preparations, Śivanāgāla Dēvi and Śivasingāla Rāju disguise themselves as poor merchants. Going to Indrakīlādri Rāju's camp, they set up tents and begin selling pillows, pails, cups, and scales. A soldier asks the price of an item, and the boy offers it for a rupee. The girl, also disguised as a man, offers the same thing for half a rupee. The boy responds with a quarter of a rupee, and the two begin to argue and scuffle.

The soldiers pull them apart, but they demand to have their quarrel settled by either a great merchant or the Rāju of the city. The soldiers insist that their Rāju can settle the issue, and the young people are taken before Indrakīlādri Rāju.

Śivanāgāla Dēvi tells Indrakīlādri Rāju a story: A merchant has a diamond. A poor merchant comes, offers 100,000 rupees for it, and gives 50,000 rupees as earnest money. Later a wealthy merchant hears about the diamond. He offers 150,000 rupees and gives 100,000 rupees as earnest money. The question is: to whom does the diamond rightfully belong?

Indrakīlādri Rāju judges that the diamond is rightfully the property of the merchant who first gave the earnest money.

Hearing this ruling, the boy and girl cast aside their merchant disguises and return home. Śivanāgāla Dēvi tells Śivasingāla Rāju that this is the way justice operates, saying that he has nothing to fear. She tells him to don his clothing and jewellery while she visits her mother. Giving her mother some excuse, she once more eludes her.

The girl prepares cold rice for the journey and gathers some money. Disguising herself as a man, she asks the groom to saddle two swift steeds. Thinking the horses to be for the wedding, he quickly saddles them. Next she goes to the Gauri officient and asks him not to perform the Gauri *pūja* before midnight.[7] She prepares clothing and adornments for the trip and arranges all the chests.

Last of all she takes the chest of Ankālaparamēśvari.[8] In this chest are heroes' swords, wooden sandals, ash pots, rice, and Śiva *lingas*. This is the chest that her father uses for worshipping Ankālamma. It is a very heavy chest, and she thinks it contains riches. When it is tied on to the horse, they are ready to go.

Mounted on swift horses, with Śivanāgāla Dēvi disguised as a man, they depart from the city. As they set out, Indrakīlādri Rāju is approaching with a great marriage procession. Unnoticed in the tumult, the two young people enter the ranks of the army. Śivanāgāla Dēvi writes a note to Indrakīlādri Rāju: 'This morning you spoke truthfully and settled the dispute between the two poor merchants. Now shamelessly, not understanding the meaning, you come to this city planning to marry.' When Śivasingāla Rāju declares himself incapable of delivering the message, she casts it into the elephant's howdah in which the Rāju is riding. Indrakīlādri Rāju reads the message and at once understands its import.

Spurring their steeds, Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi pass out of the city. Galloping along the path, they arrive at the Kriṣṇa River in the west.[9] On the grass by the bank of the Kriṣṇa River is the

Goddess Ganga. Śivanāgāla Dēvi prays to Ganga, recounting all that has led up to their flight. She asks that they be given a path to take for their escape.

Śivanāgāla Dēvi asks Śivasingāla Rāju if he can jump his horse across the river, but the boy declares himself unable to do so. Then Śivanāgāla Dēvi spurs her horse and leaps to the other bank. Seeing her success, Śivasingāla Rāju also jumps his horse to the opposite bank. There she takes the Ankālamma chest and puts it on a great twelve-trunked banyan tree.

Indrakīlādri Rāju, meanwhile, has arrived with his great procession at the home of Vankidēvamma and Vīra Sōma Rāju. The mother sends the maidservants to summon her daughter, but she is nowhere to be found. Deeply grieved, Vankidēvamma weeps for the loss of her only daughter. The girl is not in the school; she is not in the Rāju's room; she is not reading at her aunt's house. She is nowhere to be found.

Then Vankidēvamma addresses her younger brother, the man she hopes will marry her daughter. Asking if he has wrath in his heart and a moustache on his face, she tells him that if he is a Rāju, he must follow the boy, kill him, and marry the girl.

The younger brother assembles his whole army, goes to Vīra Sōma Rāju, and asks the girl's father to accompany him. When the Rāju hears the news, he laughs heartily. He is delighted that the original promise is going to be kept in spite of his wife's efforts to circumvent the plan. He has not been eating or doing *pūja* to Śiva. Rejoicing, he goes to the Śiva temple to worship. The match is an appropriate one, and he is glad.

When Vīra Sōma Rāju arrives at the temple, he discovers that the chest of the Goddess is gone. He weeps at the loss which is like the loss of his vital breath itself. He vows before Śiva to kill the boy and return with the girl and the chest. He joins forces with Indrakīlādri Rāju; together they arrive at the bank of the Kriṣṇa River.

On one bank are the joint forces of Indrakīlādri Rāju and Vīra Sōma Rāju. On the other bank are the boy and girl. The girl weeps at the sight of the armies, for her father has not kept his word. He must lose his head for the evil deeds he has committed. Śivanāgāla Dēvi asks Śivasingāla Rāju to behead her father and place a flower garland around his neck as he does so. But the boy says he is incapable of accomplishing the task.

Knowing that the sword of Ankālamma is capable of testing her father's guilt or innocence, Śivanāgāla Dēvi tells Śivasingāla Rāju that all this host has come with the intention of killing him. She wonders if

he can hurl the weapon of Ankālaparamēśvari at the pursuing host. But he tells her it is not within his power to do so. Then the girl raises the weapon and hurls it at the pursuing army. From the tip of the weapon spring forth the one hundred and one Śaktis. Cholera and all manner of diseases strike the forces of Indrakīlādri Rāju. Fever and chills, boils, and smallpox attack the pursuers. The armies fall on the grass beside Ganga and they are unable to pursue the couple.

In the past, Śiva ruled from Śivanandi Fort. On one side was the Clutching Banyan. On one side was the Bramble.[10] On one side was the thousand-tongued Ādiśēṣa. On one side was the River of Fire. If anyone approached from the side where Ādiśēṣa guarded, he was scorched to death by Ādiśēṣa's poison breath. If anyone approached from the side where the River of Fire guarded, it welled up to the sky and consumed him. If anyone approached the Bramble, it engulfed him and destroyed him. And the Clutching Banyan grabbed anyone who came near. The fort could not be taken.

When Śiva left for Kailāsa, he left his hawk and his twelve matchless warriors[11] to guard the fort. He also left Pōtarāju, Clutching Banyan, Bramble, River of Fire, and Ādiśēṣa. Pōtarāju and the twelve matchless warriors are now guarding the fort One day Śiva's hawk escapes, flies to the Krishṇa River, and lands on the banyan tree under which the two children are camped. Pōtarāju looks in the almanac, sees where the hawk has landed, calls the twelve matchless warriors, and asks them to go and bring back the hawk. When they pick up the tame hawk, they see the two beautiful children weeping under the tree.

The twelve matchless warriors ask where they are from, but the children will not tell and they ask to be left alone. But the warriors persist, and finally the boy tells the whole story of what has happened. Hearing this story, the matchless warriors inform the children that their fort is without a Rāju and his wife. They invite the children to come to the fort. But the children show them the great army that is in pursuit. The twelve matchless warriors explain what mighty men they are, and Śivanāgāla Dēvi and Śivasingāla Rāju accompany them to the fort. Six go ahead; six follow behind; the children are in the middle as they approach the fort.

At Śivanandi Fort a magnificent marriage canopy is erected. Pōtarāju, who is Brāhmaṇ,[12] and the twelve matchless warriors, as elders, celebrate the marriage of the boy and girl.

Meanwhile, the pursuing Rājus cross the Krishṇa River with their armies and approach the fort. Though Śiva has departed, the fort still has all its defences. No one can approach it from any direction. The

fort cannot be taken by anyone. The besiegers pitch their tents and begin a siege that continues for twelve years.

Daily, Pōtarāju and the one hundred and one Śaktis go for alms to the tents of the besieging Rājus. One day the Rājus, weary of giving alms to Brāhmaṇ who comes every day, decide to beat him and pull out his topknot. Pōtarāju, knowing what is in their minds, offers to reveal the secret of the fort if they will give him the offerings that he desires. They ask what it is that he wants, and he says he wants the following: sixty bull buffalo, a he-goat, a great quantity of cooked rice, perfumed rice, sandalwood, a huge quantity of legumes, a cartload of greens, and a well of water. This is Pōtarāju's request.

The Rājus give Pōtarāju the offering he has demanded. Then Pōtarāju asks all but three of the Rājus to remain behind. The three accompany him, and when he has eaten, he takes them to the battle well. There he lowers the bucket. When he draws it up, it contains water creatures, pottery shards, and a copper-plate inscription. He gives the copper plate to the Rājus to read.

The Rājus read the inscription. It says that the fort cannot be taken by Brahma, Dēvendra, or the Gods. Only if Viṣṇu incarnate, Brahma Nāyuḍu, comes will the fort be taken. The Rājus at first wonder who he might be, but then they remember how he came to Kalyāṇ searching for brides for the three Malidēva Rājus.[13] They impolitely refused him on the grounds that they were Śivas and he a Vaiṣṇava. They wore the *linga* and he wore the *nāmam*, the mark of Viṣṇu. They drove him away, telling him that they could not look on his face, but Brahma Nāyuḍu was not intimidated. He told the Rājus that he was indifferent to anything that they did or said to him. He would go and come as he saw fit.

At that time, Brahma Nāyuḍu left three hidden hoards of wealth. When he was gone, they dug up the caches and saw the seven piles. Rejecting it, they had it thrown over the boundary line. Now, remembering the incident, they conclude that this must be the same Brahma Nāyuḍu. They are worried that he will not be amenable to helping them because of the way in which they treated him. But some of the Rājus know the fame of the great warrior of Palnāḍu, and they all set out to find Brahma Nāyuḍu.

When all the Rājus and elders of Kalyāṇ arrive in Mācerla, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, is sitting by the road. He accosts the Rājus, asking them to identify themselves. Being elders and not recognizing him, they do not respond to his question. Brahma Nāyuḍu tells them that they are not on the right path to Mācerla, and shows them where to go.

The Rājus come before Brahma Nāyuḍu. Realizing that they are

great men, he descends from his throne and has them seated. He inquires why they have come, and the Rājus explain that they must conquer Śivanandi Fort.

Brahma Nāyuḍu agrees to help. They offer cash and grain, but he refuses their offer, saying that he still wants a bride for his charge. He wants a bride to make up for the disrespectful way they treated him when he came to their city. The Rājus decide that there is nothing wrong with giving a Rāju in marriage to another Rāju and agree to do as he says.

Brahma Nāyuḍu goes before his mother, Śīlamma, and explains what he is about to do. He asks for her leave and some cold rice for the trip. She gives him food and water for the journey. Next he calls Kannama and his brother-in-law, Sunkari. With these two and the Rājus, he sets out for Śivanandi Fort.

On the way to Śivanandi Fort they enter the Elakōṭi Forest. Pōtarāju sees them coming and realizes that Brahma Nāyuḍu has come to conquer the fort. He runs up, blocks the path, loudly accosts Brahma Nāyuḍu, and tells him to forget his stupid venture. When he hears this, Brahma Nāyuḍu laughs aloud, threatening to cut off the noses of Pōtarāju and his sisters.[14] He warns Pōtarāju to forget his stupid opposition.

Pōtarāju asks for a food offering to satisfy his hunger. Brahma Nāyuḍu asks his son, Kannama, to give some of the cold rice. When Pōtarāju sees this, he is amazed, weeps, and swoons. He says that sixteen tons[15] of rice, a huge quantity of perfumed rice, sandalwood, a great pile of legumes, and a well of water is insufficient for his appetite. What is he to do with this morsel of cold rice?

Brahma Nāyuḍu tells Pōtarāju to take the morsel in his left hand, transfer it to his right, and eat it. When Pōtarāju does this, by the power[16] of Viṣṇu it becomes as large as Himatgiri Mountain. Brahma Nāyuḍu takes a ewer of water. Pōtarāju complains that it is too little, but when he cups his hands and Brahma Nāyuḍu begins to pour, he can neither drink it all nor ask Brahma Nāyuḍu to stop pouring. Pōtarāju runs off.

Returning, Pōtarāju again tries to scare Brahma Nāyuḍu away. But Brahma Nāyuḍu again threatens him, and Pōtarāju asks for an offering in exchange for the secret of the fort. He asks for a billy-goat the height of a palmyra tree and a pile of rice the size of an alluvial deposit: the size of the alluvial deposit in the Elakōṭi Valley. The goat must have a crore of noses, a hundred tails, four thousand legs, two thousand ears, and two thousand horns. This is the offering that will be pleasing to Pōtarāju.

Brahma Nāyuḍu calls for Kannama to bring the billy-goat, and Pōtarāju is heartbroken at the sight of the ordinary billy-goat. He weeps and swoons. Brahma Nāyuḍu points out the nose, feet, ears, and horns of the goat, and Pōtarāju is partially satisfied. When he asks why it is not as high as a palmyra tree, Brahma Nāyuḍu requests sacrificial rice from Kannama. When Brahma Nāyuḍu takes the sacrificial rice, the billy-goat grows as high as a palmyra tree.

Then Brahma Nāyuḍu reassures Pōtarāju by telling him that there will be a Pōtarāju everywhere. Pōtarāju will be at the feast of the Goddess, where buttermilk is churned, by the threshing-floor, and where grain is stored. In all these places and more, there will always be a Pōtarāju (Plate 8). He need fear nothing.

Then Pōtarāju, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Kannama Nīḍu, Sunkari Rāma Nīḍu, and the Rājus proceed to Śivanandi Fort. When they get to the pass, the Yādava Rājus are there: Kāṭama Rāju, Kariyāla Rāju, and Erranōka Rāja.[17] Their younger sister, Śrī Dēvi,[18] is also there. She asks Brahma Nāyuḍu whence he is coming and if he is well. She tells him that the Yādavas have come. Upon hearing his mission, she requests that they be allowed to accompany him. The three Yādava Rājus, and Brahma Nāyuḍu, Sunkari Rāma Nīḍu, and Kannama Nīḍu go on to Śivanandi Fort.

As they approach, Pōtarāju calls out, announcing the arrival of Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, and his intention to conquer the fort. He will cut the Bramble; he will give an offering to Ādiśēṣa; he will turn the River of Fire into water; he will also chop down the Clutching Banyan.

Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi hear Pōtarāju's announcement. They pray to the Goddesses: Earth, Sky, and Water. A tree splits, a path opens to the serpent world, and Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi take the path.

Brahma Nāyuḍu gives an offering to Ādiśēṣa; at the touch of his foot the River of Fire becomes water; he cuts the Bramble; he also chops down the Clutching Banyan. Then he tells the Rājus to get the young couple. But Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi are in the serpent world. The twins, Akka Pinakka and Lankanna,[19] are taken by Brahma Nāyuḍu. He gives them their first solid food and takes them to Mācerla.

In the fort are the sacred, golden drums of Palnāḍu, the golden tasselled palanquin of Cennakēśvarasvāmi, Brahma Nāyuḍu's emerald dagger, the serpent pillar, the tent of the nine *nandis*, a *nandi*, and the wooden sandals. Brahma Nāyuḍu asks the soldiers if they are satisfied, and they say that they are.

Outside the fort, Brahma Nāyuḍu and the Yādavas divide the spoils. Brahma Nāyuḍu takes the top pair of drums; the Yādavas take the lower set. The Yādavas take the tent of the nine *nandis*; Brahma Nāyuḍu takes the serpent pillar. The Yādavas take the horn; Brahma Nāyuḍu takes the *Vīraṇamu* (a double drum used at weddings, etc.). Taking their spoils, they return to Mācerla.[20]

Brahma Nāyuḍu asks the Rājus for the brides that he has been promised. They agree to give them. The Rājus take Brahma Nāyuḍu and the others to Kalyāṇ. There they give the three girls to the three young Malidēva Rājus in marriage. For sixteen days the Rājus fete Brahma Nāyuḍu and his party.

At the feast Brahma Nāyuḍu asks for freshly pressed sesame oil. But they are at a feast and there are no bullocks and no oil-press. When Brahma Nāyuḍu refuses to eat without the fresh oil, Raṇa Komma Rāju calls the Erra Gollas,[21] Guṇḍina Boyya and Jaṭṭiṇḍa Boyya. These two attendants bring a basket of sesame seed, pour it on a blanket, and twist the blanket. A great stream of sesame oil gushes forth. Brahma Nāyuḍu sees this and knows he must have these mighty warriors.

Brahma Nāyuḍu instructs the three brides as to what they should ask for as a farewell present from their father. He tells them to ask for Guṇḍa Boyya and Jaṭṭi Boyya as protectors in the wilderness to which they are going. When they hear the girls' request, the Rājus know that it is not their own idea but Brahma Nāyuḍu's. The Rājus tell Brahma Nāyuḍu that they cannot do without these two mighty warriors. The Rājus leave Kalyāṇ and accompany Brahma Nāyuḍu to Mācerla along with all the people of Kalyāṇ.[22]

Notes

1 Also known as 'The Plunder of Śivanandi Fort'.

2 This is also an acceptable match, the relationship being through the mother.

3 No indication is given of where this Rāju is ruling, and I have found no historical evidence for him.

4 *rip out his tongue*: Various forms of self-sacrifice to Śiva have been associated with the Vīra Śaiva sect that was flourishing at this time. Other examples in the epic are self-decapitation and falling on spears planted with the points upward. To what extent these references reflect actual practice and in what periods is not known. For examples of self-sacrifice depicted in stone, see S. Gopalakrishna Murthy, *The Sculpture of the Kakatiyas*, p. 34.

5 *Bhāgavata*: The important Vaiṣṇavite work dealing with the life of Kriṣṇa. Mention of the *Bhārata, Bhāgavata*, and *Rāmāyaṇa*, here, does not suggest

that the girl is opposing her parents' strong Śaivism. It is only Gāleyya's formulaic way of saying that she is going to read holy texts.

6 Cf. note 23 of Story 1.

7 *Next she goes . . . before midnight*: It is traditional for the bride to visit the Gauri (Pārvati) temple and do a *pūja* before her marriage ceremony. The Gauri temple, which is equated with the temple of the village Goddess (in this case Ankālamma), is ordinarily at the outskirts of the village. In the folk tradition, the trip to the Gauri temple is a time for a bride to escape an unwanted marriage. Śivanāgāla Dēvi is apparently setting up the possibility of such an escape. *Officiant: pūjāri*, a priest or attendant upon a deity, usually a non-Brāhman.

8 *chest of Ankālaparamēśvari*: Cf. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, vol. II, pp. 292–5, for a description of such a chest and the worship associated with it among the Gollas.

9 The Krisṇa flows west to east about 100 miles south of Kalyāṇ.

10 *Clutching Banyan: aṇṭrāvi/aṇṭurâvi*, lit. the touching banyan. *Bramble: gacca kôrinda*. 'Kôrinda' is a thorny bramble and 'gacca' is a bush with hard seeds that become dangerous missiles when the bush is burned.

11 *matchless warriors*: Not clear who these are.

12 *Pôtarāju, who is a Brāhman*: I am not acquainted with any precedent for this equation, but the great appetite Pôtarāju exhibits later on is a trait regularly associated with both Pôtarāju and Brāhmaṇs. See Plate 8.

13 Gāleyya does not include much of this episode, but a more complete account is found in Lakṣmīkāntam's edition.

14 *sisters*: The one hundred and one Śaktis.

15 *ton: puṭṭi*, a weight that varies considerably from place to place. See Brown, *Telugu English Dictionary* (Hyderabad, 1966), p. 655.

16 *power: maya*.

17 Kāṭama Rāju is an important hero in the Telugu oral epic called *Yādava Rāju Katha* or sometimes *Kāṭama Rāju Kaṭha*. This tradition centres in Nellūru District where it is associated with the Goddess Ganga and sung in a manner similar to that of *The Epic of Palnāḍu*. For a printed version of part of this epic, see Veturi Prabhakarasastri, ed., *Kāṭamarāju Katha* (Madras, 1953). For a more complete version, see T. V. Subbārâvu, ed., *Kāṭamarāju Kaṭhalu*. Erranôka Rāju is Kāṭama Rāju's brother. Kariyâvala (Kariyāla) Rāju is an ancestor of the Yādavas. Thurston, vol. II, pp. 292, 295.

19 *Akka Pinakka and Lankanna*: The offspring of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi, they play an important role later in the epic.

20 *In the Fort . . . return to Mâcerla*: See above, pp. 33, 72, for more information about some of these objects. Wooden sandals are worn when entering holy places, where leather is not allowed.

21 *Erra Gollas*: A division of the Gollas, herding caste.

22 This is the explanation for the large contingent from Kalyāṇ that plays an important role in subsequent events in Palnāḍu.

Story 9

The Cock Fight

Alugu Rāju's family. Nāyakurālu's marriage. Nāyakurālu entertains Alugu Rāju's hunting party. Alugu Rāju offers a boon and Nāyakurālu asks to sit briefly on his throne. Nāyakurālu is made minister. Brahma Nāyuḍu replaces his father as minister. The dying Rāju entrusts his sons and realm to Brahma Nāyuḍu. Nāyakurālu stirs up trouble and Palnāḍu is divided. She challenges Brahma Nāyuḍu to a cock fight and pre-empts all the cocks. 'The Story of Peddanna.' His knowledge of the cock called Atanāla Ciṭṭi Malluḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu sets out while Bāla Gopanna is getting married. Rāvēlapatār fights with Kannama and asserts his right to the cock. His battles on the way to Pānugallu. His successful return and death. Bāla Gopanna is informed of his brother's death. His mother's quarrel with Śīlamma. His claim to the cock is upheld. Both sides gather for the cock fight. Nāyakurālu resorts to tricks and magic. Ciṭṭi Malluḍu is blinded and dies on Bāla Gopanna's sword. Bāla Gopanna attacks Nāyakurālu's armies. The death of Bāla Gopanna.

Alugu Rāju had three wives, Mailamā Dēvi, Būramā Dēvi, and Viravidyala Dēvi. Vīravidyala Dēvi was the first wife; Būramā Dēvi was the second; Mailamā Dēvi was the third. One wife had no children. One wife had several sons. They were Nalagāma Rāju, Narasinga Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju. She had five sons. One mother had the three Malidēva Rājus: Cinna Malidēva Rāju, Pedda Malidēva Rāju, and Bāla Malidēva Rāju. She had three sons. Nalagāma Rāju, Narasinga Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju were the elder. The three Malidēva Rājus were the younger.[1]

Alugu Rāju ruled the ninety-nine villages of Gurajāla. The ninety-nine villages of Mācerla were ruled by Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and Brahma Nāyuḍu.

One day Alugu Rāju took his soldiers and went on a hunting expedition to the forest of Pondugula-Vāḍapalli.[2] When they arrived there, they began to hunt. Nāyakurālu saw that the Rāju had come.

Nāyakurālu's village was Jiṭṭa Gāmālapāḍu. She was the beautiful daughter of Caudari Rāma Reḍḍi; she was the daughter-in-law of Mēkapōtula Jaggā Reḍḍi; she dwelt freely in Gāmālapāḍu.[3]

Concerning Nāyakurālu's marriage, this is what happened. She became a widow. In the first year of her marriage, her parents died. In the second year, her father-in-law died. In the third year, her husband also died. The elders who performed the marriage ceremony died. The carpenter who did the carpentry died. The smith who did the smithing died. The potter who made the pots died. This is the way it was with Nāyakurālu.

Alugu. Rāju took a hunting party to the forest of Pondugula-Vāḍapalli. When they arrived at the forest, they began hunting. The Rāju and his party slew gayal, axis deer, crocodile, wild boar, peacock, lapwing, numidian crane, and all manner of birds and animals. The Rāju and his soldiers finished hunting and started home.

Nāyakurālu observed their approach. She called on Īśvara and summoned her servants. On the road between Gāmālapāḍu and Gura-jāla, she got her servants to construct a rest booth. It was cool with perfume and rose-water. She also had a feast prepared. When Alugu Rāju and his party arrived, she seated each man in his proper place and had them served. She gave fine clothing to Alugu Rāju. She had him served, and he ate. When he had eaten, she provided him with a bedstead. On the bedstead was spread a mattress; on the mattress was spread a jewelled cover; on the jewelled cover was spread a swans-down quilt. The lotus-eyed[4] Rāju slept. He was very weary after the hunt and slept soundly.

When he awoke, the Rāju thought like this, 'Who can it be? Who has fed all my elephants, camels, horses, and men? Who has provided all this?'

He called his minister and said, 'Minister! Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, who has prepared this fine meal and fed us?'

'Sir, in Jiṭṭa Gāmālapāḍu dwells the clever Nāyakurālu. She is the beautiful daughter of Caudari Rāma Reḍḍi and the daughter-in-law of Mēkapōtala Jaggā Reḍḍi. She dwells freely in Gāmālapāḍu,' he said.

'Call her! Call her, Minister!' said the Rāju.

They called Nāyakurālu, and she came.

'Woman! Nāyakurālu, you have done all this at your own expense. Now ask whatsoever boon you desire, and I will grant it,' said the Rāju.

'My Lord! Rāju, there is nothing that I lack. I ask only your assurance that when that time comes my request will be honoured,' she said.

'I will give you whatever you ask,' said Alugu Rāju.

One day, after some time had elapsed, Nāyakurālu went to the capital city, Gurajāla. When she got there, Alugu Rāju, Brahma Nāyuḍu and the elders were holding court. The Seventy-two Clansmen, the Sixty-six Heroes, and the Seventy-seven Warriors all came. In the court were Alugu Rāju, Narasinga Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju. The Reḍḍi landlords were there: Cintapalli Reḍḍi who ruled that area; Gurava Reḍḍi of Gurajāla; Mallā Reḍḍi of Māḍugula; and Anappā Reḍḍi, the headman of Aḍigopala.[5] All the people were there: Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras.

Then Nāyakurālu came, said, 'O Father! Alugu Rāju!' and bowed down before him. 'Father, one day you granted me a boon and offered assurances that you would honour it when I asked. The boon was this. You said that you would give me whatever I desired. Now I want to make my request.'

'Ask it! Ask it, Nāyakurālu!' he said.

When he asked her to make her request, she said, 'Father, there is nothing that I lack. I have all the material things that there are to have. You must get down from the lion throne on which you sit. You must get down for a period of seven *gadiyas*.[6] I want to sit on your lion throne for a time.' This was what Nāyakurālu had to say.

Then the Rāju, being a man of Palnāḍu, true to his word, and unwilling to break a promise, got down from his lion throne. When he had got down, Nāyakurālu mounted the throne and had a canopy raised overhead. Around her she had assembled all manner of wealth and splendour.

When Alugu Rāju saw her sitting in this fashion, he thought, 'It will be good if I arrange to have her as my minister.'

The Rāju was very pleased and said, 'O Woman, you must be my minister.' Then he arranged to have her as his minister.

Some days passed. One day Nāyakurālu said, 'O Sir! Alugu Rāju, your minister, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, has become very old. He has a son named Brahma Nāyuḍu. It will be good if you make him your minister.'

'O Woman! Nāyakurālu, he is a young fellow. He wouldn't know what to do. He is but a child.'

'Never mind that. It must be done,' she said. Every day she repeated her advice.

For a long time the Rāju did not say anything. At last he agreed and said, 'O Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, you have been minister for long enough. You must arrange to have your son, Brahma Nāyuḍu, assume your responsibilities.'

'As you say, Great Soul, as you say. That is fine with me,' he said.

One day the Rāju summoned worthy Brāhmaṇs, and having determined a propitious time, he prepared to install Brahma Nāyuḍu as his minister.

When the appointed time arrived, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu said to his son, 'Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, you must go to the court. Everyone will be in attendance today. You must go and bow down to the Rāju. If he tells you to do anything, you must do it. If not, do not worry about it.' These were the father's instructions to his son.

Hearing this, Brahma Nāyuḍu, who is beyond description, the seer of the human world, Viṣṇu incarnate, said, 'Father! Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu, what must I do when I get there?'

'The Rāju will be sitting on his lion throne. You must go and do obeisance to him,' said Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu.

Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed aloud. 'Father, you say that I must go to the court and do obeisance to the Rāju? Fine, I will do as you say, but there is no one who can stand to receive my obeisance. No one can bear it.'

That day Brahma Nāyuḍu prepared to go. He had tumeric made ready and applied the twelve Vaiṣṇava marks to his body.[7] When he had performed ablutions and applied the marks of Viṣṇu he went to the assembly hall. When he arrived at the court, all the courtiers were in attendance. There were Rājus, ministers, and ambassadors. When Brahma Nāyuḍu arrived, they were all seated, and the Rāju was on his lion throne.

'O Father! Alugu Rāju, I prostrate myself before you,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

The glass pillar[8] broke, but the Rāju took no notice of it.

A second time Brahma Nāyuḍu said, 'Rāju, I prostrate myself before you.'

As Brahma Nāyuḍu did obeisance, a carbuncle arose in the middle of the Rāju's back. He felt sharp pains like flames in his back. The pain was as if his body were being cut with sharp knives and barbers' razors. He wept many tears. From his right eye flowed a torrent of tears.

'Father! Father! O Narasimha Avatār! O Purifier of the World! Protect me, Bhārgava! Protect me, Rāma! O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I did not know your pride. Only grant me your leave, and I will attain Vaikuṇṭha.'[9] said the Rāju, Alugu Rāju.

Alugu Rāju spoke again, 'Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I have three wives. They are Vīravidyala Dēvi, Būramā Dēvi, and Mailamā Dēvi. One of them, Vīravidyala Dēvi, has no offspring. Būramā Dēvi has five sons: Nalagāma Rāju, Narasinga Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju.

Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju. One wife has three sons.[10] The five sons are the elder, and the three sons are the younger. What will become of them? You must not think of them as my sons but as your own,' he said.

He called Brahma Nāyuḍu's father, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu. He called Brahma Nāyuḍu as well. When he had entrusted the boys to Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and Brahma Nāyuḍu, the Rāju attained Vaikuṇṭha.

After that, Nāyakurālu began harassing the little boys.

Gurava Reḍḍi of Gurajāla had seven daughters-in-law. One day they went to the Daṇḍi Creek for water and Nāyakurālu saw them as they were returning with full pots on their heads.

'O Father! Pedda Malidēva Rāju! Cinna Malidēva Rāju! Bāla Malidēva Rāju! Look! Gurava Reḍḍi's seven daughters-in-law are coming with water. Take up your weapons. You must strike the pot carried by the first girl. Put a hole in it so that the water flows out. Strike it! Strike it, Little Boy,' she said.

Pedda Malidēva Rāju grasped his weapon and hurled it with a mighty yell. The weapon penetrated all seven water pots, and the water gushed out. The weapon made holes in all the pots and they were emptied.

Nāyakurālu observed this and wondered. She went to the Rājus and said, 'O Nalagāma Rāju! Narasinga Rāju! Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju! Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju! See the sort of thing that your younger brothers are doing. They only eat and get into trouble. Look what they did to Gurajāla Gurava Reḍḍi's daughters-in-law. Gurava Reḍḍi is very angry.'

The boys were reprimanded and released.

Another day, a bird was flying in the sky. Nāyakurālu saw it and called out, 'Look there, Pedda Malidēva Rāju and Cinna Malidēva Rāju. There goes a bird. You must knock it down while it is on the wing.'

The boys did as Nāyakurālu bade them. Again she went and reported what they had done: 'O Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju, see what sort of thing these boys are doing. They are committing all manner of violent acts.'

Śīlamma became aware of what was happening. 'Father, the boys are being badly treated by their elder brothers. If you do not take charge of them, they will be victimized,' said Śīlamma, the wife of Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and mother of Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Then Brahma Nāyuḍu took charge of the boys. It was at that time that the ninety-nine villages of Mācerla came under Brahma Nāyuḍu's control. They were given to the Malidēva Rājus. But because they

were children, Brahma Nāyuḍu assumed both the ministerial and the monarchical authority. The ninety-nine villages of Gurajāla[11] were ruled by Nāyakurālu, Nalagāma Rāju, Narasinga Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju.

One day the elders of Mācerla came to the capital, Gurajāla. Among them were the Sixty-six Heroes, the seventy-two clansmen, and the Seventy-seven Warriors. Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Sūr Nīḍu, Mali Nīḍu, and Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu came with the rest of the elders.

When the elders had finished their business and were about to leave Gurajāla, Nāyakurālu brought a very small cock and a very large cock into the court. She released the cocks in the assembly hall. The large cock ruffled its feathers, crowed, and began kicking the small one. The small one was only half grown, and it began to run away.

As the young cock ran away, Nāyakurālu, because it was her home and she ruled there, said, 'Take off! Take off, Brahma Nāyuḍu! Get off my land!' These words were spoken in the court in the presence of Brahma Nāyuḍu and all the elders.

Again she said, 'You are beaten. You are beaten, Brahma Nāyuḍu,' clapping her hands in the presence of the court.

Brahma Nāyuḍu looked on and wondered. 'This is very strange. If two cocks are the same size, they can each give and take, and it will be a good fight. One of these is very small, and the other is very large. How is it that the cock that flees is mine? And why is the large cock Nāyakurālu's? If the little cock is kicked by the big one and runs off, how is that to be interpreted as my defeat?' he thought.

'O Son! Kannama!' he said. 'Come, my son Kannama, Vikramārka[12] in battle. Come, my son with the sharp weapon and the sharp moustache.'

'What is it, Father?'

'Look there! The little cock is fleeing. The big one is giving chase and kicking it. You must leap in front of the little cock and draw three interdictions,'[13] said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Then Kannama praised Cennakēśvara and said, 'I draw an interdiction on the feet of the Goddess Ankālaparamēśvari. I draw an interdiction on the feet of my father, Brahma Nāyuḍu. I draw an interdiction on the feet of Pōtarāju.'

When the young cock approached the interdictions, it turned in its tracks, ruffled its feathers and crowed. Then the little cock began furiously kicking the big cock that had just then been chasing it. As a result of this thrashing, the life departed from the big cock.

Abuse is repaid by abuse; blows are repaid by blows; the wise man is

repaid by wisdom; the dice player is repaid by the dice. Therefore, it is wise to keep one's thoughts to oneself.

No one said anything; everyone kept his thoughts to himself. Brahma Nāyuḍu and the elders discussed some matters, and then it was time to return to Mācerla. As they were about to leave Gurajāla, Nāyakurālu approached Brahma Nāyuḍu's palanquin and laid her hand upon it.

'What about this, Brahma Nāyuḍu? It is said that a dice player is repaid by the dice; abuse is repaid by abuse; blows are repaid by blows. You and I must arrange to hold a cock fight,' she said.

'What do you mean? You are a woman, and I am a man. How can we have a cock fight?' he said.

When they had gone as far Cerlaguḍipāḍu,[14] the elders said, 'You must accept the challenge. You must do it.'

'All right, I will do as you say,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

The match was set, but the details of time and place were yet to be decided. Meanwhile, Nāyakurālu gathered up all the cocks in her villages as well as the cocks in Brahma Nāyuḍu's villages, those in the vicinity of Mācerla. The cock by the mortar was Nāyakurālu's; the cock in the house was Nāyakurālu's; the cock by the warming fire was Nāyakurālu's; the cock on the roof was Nāyakurālu's. Even the eggs and chicks were Nāyakurālu's. This was the strategem that Nāyakurālu adopted.

Brahma Nāyuḍu received word of this. Then he said, 'O Son! Kannama, bring me a cock from somewhere or the other.' This was the order that Brahma Nāyuḍu gave.

No matter where Kannama looked, he could not find a single cock for Brahma Nāyuḍu. Wherever he looked, the cocks belonged to Nāyakurālu and to no one else. Even the cocks in Brahma Nāyuḍu's own villages belonged to Nāyakurālu. No matter where he looked, there were no cocks to be found.

Brahma Nāyuḍu pondered and pondered, wondering what to do. As he was considering what to do, his elder brother, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, observed him.

'O Younger Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu!' he said.

'What is it, Elder Brother?'[15]

'What is that keeps you so deeply engrossed in thought? What is it that you are pondering? Tell me, Brahma Nāyuḍu,' he said.

'O Elder Brother! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, I have agreed to a cock fight with Nāyakurālu. But wherever I look, there is not a single cock to be found,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'O Younger Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I will tell you the secret of

the cock. I will tell you the place where it can be found. But to bring it back we need a brave warrior. We need a Hero,' said Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

'O.K., I shall go myself,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate.

This is the story of the location of the cock:[16] Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju was born of a Velama family in Pālamācāpuri, but he was brought up by a Rāju family. These are the marks he bore: he had chowries on his back; he had . . . on his underarm; he had lotuses on his feet; he had *śrīvaikuṇṭham* on his hands; he had the philosopher's stone on his teeth; he had a wonderful eye on his forehead; he had *rudrākṣa* on his neck.[17] He was a great soul, born of Īśvara's boon. He was born a Velama and given the name Peddanna. Because he was raised by a Rāju, he acquired the name Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

They looked all over that area, but nowhere could they find a bride for him.[18] Vīravidyala Dēvi, the Rāju's wife, brought him up with great care. One day she acquired a winged horse, capable of travelling 360 *amadas*, and gave it to Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

'Father, you may go east, west, or north, but you must not go south,' the mother said to her son.

He went to the east and saw the oceans and other things. He took some journeys to the west. He also took a few trips to the north.

'What's this? My mother told me not to go to the south. I will have to go there without my mother knowing it,' he said.

Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju mounted his horse and departed for the southern country. In the southern country he journeyed to the land of Cinna Kancerla, Pedda Kancerla, Matukamalli, Śānampūdi, Pōtlūru, Boggaram, Ipūru, Enugulapālem, and Piccagalapālem. The ruler of these sixteen surrounding villages was Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju of Kancerla. He had one hundred sons, one hundred daughters, one hundred grandsons, and one hundred sons-in-law. His home was in Angavaram.[19]

Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju arrived in Pedda Kancerla and married Mutyālakomma, the daughter of Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju. After some time, all the Rājus of Kancerla, the one hundred sons, one hundred grandsons, and one hundred sons-in-law, plotted to kill Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, the husband of Mutyālakomma.

The Kancerla tank, which was a great tank, was dry. All the great Kamma[20] and Reḍḍi farmers planted chick-peas on the lake bed. A fine crop grew and was ripening. Two celestial horses named Storm Cloud and Fair Cloud, a husband and wife, came regularly, grazed on the chick-peas, and went away. Storm Cloud was the female and Fair Cloud was the male. Storm Cloud was in her ninth month of preg-

nancy. The celestial horses came daily and grazed. The farmers, seeing that their crops were being destroyed, went to the Rāju.

'O Rāju! Kriṣṇa Gandharva Rāju of Kancerla, your elephants, camels, and horses are grazing in our fields. This is causing a great deal of trouble. You are Rājus and you did not tell us you were going to do this. Shouldn't the government reimburse us for the damages?' said the farmers.

'What is the meaning of this? Attendants, have our horses been loose in the fields?' asked the Rāju.

'No, Sir, they have not.'

'Mahouts, have our elephants been in the fields?' said the Rāju.

'No, Sir, they have not.'

This is what they did one day. At one gate they stationed horsemen. At one gate they stationed elephants. At one gate they stationed. . . . In this way, they stationed forces in all the four directions. They carried drums, war drums, and torches.

Storm Cloud and Fair Cloud came whistling down from the sky and alighted on the chick-pea crop. The began to graze. The mare, Storm Cloud, whinnied. When she did so, all the men lit the torches and beat the drums. The stallion, Fair Cloud, rose into the sky. The mare, Storm Cloud, tried to follow her husband, but she was in her ninth month of pregnancy.[21] When she tried to flee, the foetus in her womb miscarried and fell to the ground. The Rājus of Kancerla, thinking that she had a belly ache from eating too much, fell on the mare and killed her. Some of the other Rājus slew the stallion. They took the foal, built a paddock, and raised it. But no one could ride it because it was a celestial horse.

All the Rājus, the one hundred sons, one hundred grandsons, and one hundred sons-in-law, plotted to kill Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. They became enraged at him and abused him. They victimized him and created a great disturbance. But when it was over, they realized that they could not kill them. All the Rājus, the sons, grandsons, and sons-in-law, raised a complaint to the Rāju. They decided that they had to find some way to kill Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. Unable to think of another way to kill him, they at length concluded that he might be slain by means of the horse.

The Rāju called Peddanna to the court and said, 'O Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju!'

'What is it, Father-in-law?'

'Take this *tāmbūlam*,' said the Rāju.

'What is the purpose of this *tāmbūlam*, Father-in-law?' said Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

'Go ahead and take it! Never mind why,' said the Rāju.

'Perhaps it doesn't matter, but it would be good of you to tell me,' said Peddanna.

'It is no great matter. I have a colt in my stables, and it is a very recalcitrant beast. One way or the other, I must have it broken,' said the Rāju.

'Bring it on! Bring it on, Father-in-law. As my name is Peddanna, I know horses,' said Peddanna. He preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened; he gnashed his teeth; his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit.

Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju accepted the *tāmbūlam*. When he had done so, he bridled the horse with a knifed bridle and saddled it with a cutting saddle. He took it to the court. Then he went to his wife.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer, you will mount that horse and disappear. It will throw you in some sea or jungle. If that happens, I must not live for even three hours longer; I must not appear before the Rāju's eyes. I must not survive for seven hours; I must not come before the Rāju. They will prepare my pyre and torment me terribly. What will be my refuge?' said his wife.

'O Wedded Wife,[22] do not be concerned. When they come to torment you, you must stall. Try on this sari and that. Try on this blouse and that. I will return through the sky from behind the jasmine garden. When you approach the court, you must be on the look-out. I will come and save you. When the one who is to kill you raises his sword, and when you have bowed to the court and are about to leap into the flames, I will come and rescue you,' said Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

He went to the court. The horse was bridled with a bridle affixed with knives, saddled with a cutting saddle, and brought to the court. When the horse saw Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, it reared and whinnied. Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju approached. The horse shied this way and that, not allowing him to mount.

Then Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju called on his patron God, Cennakēśvara-svāmi. He also called on Īśvara. He leaped a *yojanam* into the sky and landed on the horse's back. He spurred the horse which leaped a *yojanam* into the sky and entered the clouds. No matter how hard Peddanna tried to rein it in, the horse did not slacken its pace. The knives on the bridle cut deep into the horse's neck, and streams of blood poured down. The juice of the *tāmbūlam* that the Rāju had given him fell into the middle of the square. The turban from his head fell on the great dike of the Kancerla tank where it remains to this day and is very beautiful. And Peddanna disappeared into the sky.[23]

When he was gone, Mutyālakomma's kinsmen said, 'Many great

Rājus came, and you would not marry them. You insisted on marrying this man. You must not remain alive for three hours. Let the pyre be prepared. You must not remain alive for seven hours. Prepare the pyre.'

When they had spoken, they prepared the pyre with fine sandal-wood kindling. They tormented her most horribly.

When Mutyālakomma arrived at the assembly hall, she saw the streams of blood. Her heart broke, and she cried, 'Listen to what I ask, O Lord of Breath. Listen to my entreaties, O Lord of Breath. Master of Life! Where are you, Lord?'

Her waist bent and she fell to the earth. When she recovered from her swoon, she rose up quickly. Mutyālakomma approached the pyre. As she drew near, they tormented her unmercifully.

Meanwhile, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju was sitting with Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Īśvara. Nārada Brahma approached him and said, 'What is this, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju? They are tormenting your wife and causing her to suffer most horribly.'

When he heard these words, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju remembered. He addressed Brahma, Īśvara, and Viṣṇu, saying, 'Great Soul! Brahma! Brahmātmā, Bhusurajyēstā, Parameṣṭī, Pitāmahā, Hiraṇyagarbha, Lōkeśā, Svayat . . ., Bhringī, Bhringī, . . ., Nandinām, Nandikēśvarahā! Lord! Īśvara! Viṣṇu! Nārāyana! Kriṣṇō! Vaikuṇṭhō! Vithalēśvarahō! Dāmadarō! Hriśīkēśō! Kēśavō! Gāruḍadhrijahā![24] Lord, I must go. They are tormenting my wife.'

When Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju went to his horse, the horse said, 'O Sir! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, for some reason or the other I went to the human world and fell into your hands. But I have now spent some time with my parents, and I will never return to earth.' It was a celestial horse.

Then the Gods called Nārada Brahma and said, 'O Nārada Brahma, you must go. Take charge of the horse, mount it, protect the three worlds, and give it to Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.'

Nārada Brahma took the horse. Because he ruled the three worlds, it acquired a corporeal form. He brought it and gave it to Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju mounted the horse and descended through the sky. As he approached, Mutyālakomma was being tormented unmercifully. No one expected his arrival. All the people of the sixteen surrounding villages, Cinna Kancerla, Pedda Kancerla, Matukumalli, Śānampūdi, Pōtlūru, Boggaram, Ipūru, Enugulapālem, and Piccagalapālem, were there: Brāhmaṇs, Kṣātriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras, all. They had gathered to see Mutyālakomma mount the pyre. As they watched, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju released the silk turban from his head.

Mutyālakomma grabbed the end of the turban, and Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju pulled her up on to the horse's back. When he had pulled her up, they rode into the sky.

Then Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju barred all the gates of the city and began to wage a ferocious war against the one hundred sons, one hundred grandsons, and one hundred sons-in-law. The way they fought is this: like two bulls mauling, like rutting elephants churning the earth, like mountains clashing together. Thus did Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju battle against the one hundred sons, one hundred grandsons, and one hundred sons-in-law. The fought like Vāli and Sugrīva. Heads fell on the earth; gaping heads lay about; seventy-two heaps of fat flesh piled up; blackened heads were all about. Thus did Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju wage a terrible war against his father-in-law.

As Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju fought, he carried his herald and his wife, Mutyālakomma, on the back of the horse. That night they arrived at Pānugallu. Peddanna had ploughed all of Kancerla and sown it to castor beans. That night he came to Pānugallu. Circling Pānugallu to the right is Nālam's moat. In Nālam's moat is a spillway a thousand *kuccelas* wide.[25] Coming to that pond, he paused before proceeding to Pālamācāpuri in the north.

As he arrived there, the lord of the day set behind the Western Mountain; thick darkness enveloped all the earth; stars twinkled in the sky. The sun set as they arrived. Mutyālakomma sat on the slab. When she was seated, the lotus-eyed Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju lay down on his wife's right thigh and went to sleep.

As he slept, there was, unknown to him, a cock under that same slab. By a curse of the great sage, Gautama;[26] a mighty man, the equal of Bāla Gopanna, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju, had been incarnated as a cock and incarcerated under that slab. Being a celestial horse, the steed pranced and pranced.

The cock under the slab crowed, saying, 'Hey! Who are you? You're stamping on my head. Who's there? If I come out of here, I'll kick your head off.'

The horse wondered at this and said, 'Who are you? Who cries out so frightfully? What is your caste? What is your clan? I was foaled on the Kancerla battlefield. I am the horse named Kārubollanna.'

'I beheaded the Rājus of the sixty-six cities[27] before coming here. My name is Atanāla Ciṭṭi Malluḍu,' said the cock.

Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju overheard the conversation between the two. In the morning he went on to Pālamācāpuri. After some time, all the people of Palnāḍu moved to Mācerla.

'O Younger Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I will tell you the secret of

the cock. But it is not ours. Though you are Viṣṇu incarnate, you will not be able to bring it back. It is not within your power to do so. It belongs to Bāla Gopanna. It belongs to the Yādavas,' said Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.

Bāla Gopanna lived in Maṇḍādi[28] which is here close to Mācerla. It was the day of Bāla Gopanna's wedding, and the propitious time was at hand. He put the consecrated thread on his wrist, the mark of Viṣṇu on his forehead, and the turban on his head. The wedding was about to take place.

Now in those days it was the custom among Rājus to beat the war drum at the time of a wedding. It was customary to beat the war drum only at the time of a marriage or during wartime. But these Rājus were from Umanābādu[29] near Kalyāṇ. They had neither the war drum nor the custom. When they came from Umanābādu, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Kāma Rāju,[30] and Bāla Gopanna said, 'Listen, Brahma Nāyuḍu! We don't want to bother with trifling matters. If you have any important work to be done, send a messenger, and we will come.' With this understanding they were brought from the Rājus of Kalyāṇ.

A messenger came and said, 'I will go and get them.'

Brahma Nāyuḍu considered the suggestion very carefully. As he was deciding what to do, all the elders gathered around. Āvālavāru, Āṇēmuvāru, Koṇḍavīṇḍulavāru, Gōvindavāru, Mutasānivāru, Muyyurūvāru, Narmālavāru, Nāyanivāru, Paiḍicukkalu, Palapartivāru,[31] all these were there. Brahma Nāyuḍu, Sūr Nīḍu, Malli Nīḍu, and all the rest were there as well.

When they had assembled, they spoke to Brahma Nāyuḍu, saying, 'Nāyuḍu! Brahma Nāyuḍu! Nāyuḍu, Brahmayya, Narasimhamūrti, Purifier of the World, Filler of the Universe! Protect us, O Rāma! O Younger Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, circling Pānugallu to the right is Nālam's moat. In Nālam's moat is a spillway a thousand *kuccelas* wide. On the spillway is a great slab. Under that slab is an ironstone cock. If you have that cock brought, it will suit your purposes.'

When they told him this, Brahma Nāyuḍu pondered long and hard, wondering what to do.

The cock was Bāla Gopanna's. Bāla Gopanna's wedding was in process. Bāla Gopanna was the Rāju of Maṇḍāḍi. He had put the consecrated thread on his wrist and he was covered with tumeric. During the wedding, the war drum was supposed to be sounded. But Brahma Nāyuḍu departed without beating the war drum.

'O Son! Kannama,' he said.

This is the battle dress that Kannama wore as he set out. He carried a

six-cubit weapon in his left hand. In his right hand he carried a twelve-cubit broadsword.[32] Thus did Kannama set out. Brahma Nāyuḍu was seated in his palanquin. Together, Brahma Nāyuḍu and Kannama set forth to get the cock.

At the same time, the mighty warrior Rāvēlapatār, younger brother of Bāla Gopanna, was on his way to the herd. His elder brother's wedding was in progress. His brother and all his kith and kin were attending to the marriage ceremony. As the younger brother, Rāvēlapatār, strode along to the herd, he carried sixty falcons under his right arm and sixty falcons under his left arm. On his head he carried a porridge pouch. As he walked along, he ate peanuts. At the village boundary, Rāvēlapatār met Brahma Nāyuḍu in his palanquin, accompanied by Kannama Nīḍu.

When they met, Rāvēlapatār thought, 'It looks as if my brother-in-law is going somewhere, but he didn't say a word to me about it.' His face showed some irritation.

Brahma Nāyuḍu noticed this and said, 'O Son! Kannama, your brother-in-law seems to be a bit irritated. Speak to him.'

'Brother-in-law! Rāvēlapatār,' said Kannama.

Rāvēlapatār said nothing.

A second time, Kannama said, 'What is this, Rāvēlapatār? Won't you speak?'

He said nothing.

A third time Kannama Nīḍu spoke. This time he was a bit derisive and insistent. 'Brother-in-law, you are a fine Golla, but you are crazy as a *vēpa*[33] fruit. Aren't you going to talk?' said Kannama.

At those words, Rāvēlapatār flared up, violently angry. He threw the falcons from under his right arm in one direction. He threw the young falcons he had under his left arm in the other direction. He hung his porridge pouch on a tree.

'Brother-in-law! Kannama, let me tell you something. I was a Golla in the Krita Age; I was a Golla in the Trēta Age; I was also a Golla in the Dvāpara Age. Like your father, Brahma Nāyuḍu, I am a Golla. But I am not a latter-day Golla as he is,' said Rāvēlapatār.

At those words, Kannama Nīḍu flared up, violently angry. He preened his great moustache and said, 'O Father, how is it that you call my father a latter-day Golla?'

Brahma Nāyuḍu had incarnated as Kriṣṇa, the Yādava avatar. That is why he said what he did.

'A shining scion of the lunar race is the ruler, Alugu Rāju. Married to Vīravidyala Dēvi, their son was born through a boon of the Three Eyed One. Mallikārjuna is born in the likeness of a man as Pedda

Malidēva Rāju, the lord of the earth. The minister of that Rāju is Viṣṇu incarnate. Born as the son of Rēcerla Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and Śīlamma, he is the lotus-eyed one, Kriṣṇa of the Kali Age, the incarnation of mercy. He was born on the earth as Brahmayya. My father's name is Brahma Nāyuḍu, and he is Viṣṇu incarnate. How can you call him a Golla?' said Kannama Nīḍu.

Kannama Nīḍu and Rāvēlapatār clashed in front of Brahma Nāyuḍu. They came together and began waging a terrible, terrible battle. Kannama Nīḍu was Kannama Nīḍu, himself. Rāvēlapatār was also a mighty warrior and a great Hero. They fought like two bulls mauling, like rutting elephants churning the earth, like hills clashing together. They fought like Rāma and Rāvaṇa; they fought like Karṇa and Ārjuna coming together. Thus did they fight a terrible, terrible battle. They grasped each other as a vine twists around a tree.

Kannama Nīḍu caught Rāvēlapatār in a mighty grip and leaped into the middle of the assembly hall in Mācerla. Rāvēlapatār twisted and turned to and fro. He gave Kannama Nīḍu a mighty blow, and extracting himself from the grip, he leaped a *yojanam* into the air, landing in front of Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Brahma Nāyuḍu marvelled and thought, 'This is not good. The elders will find fault with me for allowing these two brothers-in-law to fight in my presence.'

He said, 'O Son! Kannama, stop! Stop it! O Brother-in-law! Rāvēlapatār, an even temper is an ornament to a man. Stop it! Stop it, Rāvēlapatār!' said Brahmayya. He calmed their wrath.

'Brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, where are you going?' asked Rāvēlapatār.

'O Father, I am going to get a cock. I am going to Pānugallu. Circling Pānugallu to the right is Nālam's moat. In Nālam's moat is a spillway a thousand *kuccelas* wide. Under the slab is a cock. I am going to get that cock,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Rāvēlapatār laughed aloud and said, 'Brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, you have no affinity with that cock. The cock is mine. It belongs to us. How do you propose to bring it back? There is not a chance that you will be able to accomplish it. I, myself, must go. If not I, then, my elder brother, Bāla Gopanna, must go and bring back the cock. You have no affinity with it. How will you be able to bring it back? Perhaps you think you will be able to do it because you are Viṣṇu incarnate. Forget it! You can't do it!'

'O.K., Brother-in-law, go ahead and get it,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'In those days we made an agreement. When we were in Kalyāṇ you vowed that you would call us if you had any work to be done. With that

understanding you brought us from Pālamācāpuri.[34] Now you have set out without saying a word to us. What do you mean by doing that? It is a breach of promise. You can't do it. You are a man who should be trustworthy, a man of Palnāḍu, and you must not break your word,' said Rāvēlapatār.

'O.K., then you go,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu, giving him camphor *tāmbūlam*. 'Father, go safely. Go to Pānugallu, get the cock, and bring it back.'

When he had taken leave, Rāvēlapatār set out without telling his elder brother and without going to the herd. All his people were busy with the wedding when he set forth. Swiftly he travelled. He leaped and bounded along. . . .[35] He went with the swiftness of Hanuman. This was the way that Rāvēlapatār went to Pānugallu.

On the way, Rāvēlapatār met a Rāju[36] called Dūlāla Poti Reḍḍi.[37] This man had placed a timber across the path and challenged anyone to cross it and fight with him. If a man chose to walk around the beam, he did nothing. Rāvēlapatār jumped over the beam that Dūlāla Poti Reḍḍi had placed across the path.

The Rāju said, 'Hey, who are you? You have crossed my blockade and now you must fight me.'

Dūlāla Poti Reḍḍi and Rāvēlapatār clashed and fought a terrible, terrible battle. Dūlāla Poti Reḍḍi went to sleep.[38] He was slain by Rāvēlapatār.

Rāvēlapatār went on for some distance and met a man called Cākala Marayālu[39] who was born of Īśvara's boon. Īśvara is known as: Gaurīmanōhara, Gangōtamānga, Nāgakankaṇa, Śiva, Nandivāhanuḍu, Śankara, Ghanagajāsurabhanga, Kāmabhasmānga, Lalitaśitakandhara, Śarabhāvatāra.[40] The man was born of this same Īśvara's boon, and his name was Cākala Marayālu. He was mounted on an elephant on which he carried his bundle of dirty clothing, a silver pot, and a gold kettle. His wife, Sītā Dēvi, rode along on the elephant as he went to the creek. He had all Rāvēlapatār's clothing.

'What's this? It looks as though you have my silver pot and my gold kettle. Come and fight with me,' said Rāvēlapatār.

Rāvēlapatār and Cākala Marayālu clashed and fought a terrible, terrible battle. Heaps of fat flesh and heaps of blackened heads piled up. Rāvēlapatār grabbed Cākala Marayālu, twisted him, tore him apart, and tossed him aside. Since he was born of Īśvara's boon, the two parts of his body came together once again. Again he clashed with Rāvēlapatār. They fought for a full watch, but Cākala Marayāla did not die.

Nārada Brahma, guardian of the three worlds, watched the battle.

He was on his way to Vaikuṇṭha, attending to the affairs of the three worlds. He thought that Rāvēlapatār was not looking in his direction. But then Rāvēlapatār looked up. Nārada Brahma spun from right to left and from left to right. Rāvēlapatār understood what he should do. He grabbed Cākala Marayālu and threw him to the earth. Then slashing with his dagger, he cut him in two and threw the right half to the left and the left half to the right.[41]

After decapitating Cākala Marayālu, Rāvēlapatār went on to fight many more battles. His weapon was badly nicked. The sun, which had risen in the east, approached Gaṇḍa Island in the west. His body bore many wounds. Blood flowed out of his eyes. But Rāvēlapatār took golden needles and sewed his eyelids open with silk thread. Fighting as he went, Rāvēlapatār at last arrived in Pānugallu.

He offered *pānakamu* and burnt offerings; he made swings and sang lullabies.[42] He sat on the vault and said, 'O Little Brother! Ciṭṭi Malluḍu!'

From within, the cock crowed, 'Who are you?'

'I am Bāla Gopanna's younger brother. My name is Rāvēlapatār, Younger Brother,' he said.

'What is it, Father? I would come out, but you might be overwhelmed by my ferocity. If you draw yourself up as for battle, I will come out,' said the cock.

'Come on out, Younger Brother,' said Rāvēlapatār.

The cock ruffled his feathers and his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit. He crowed and kicked the slab. When he did so, the slab broke into pieces that flew into the sky. The cock flew to Rāvēlapatār who drew himself up so that he would not shake or be fearful. Rāvēlapatār put the cock under his arm.

Rāvēlapatār had fought many, terrible battles along the path, and he was mortally wounded. He arrived in Mācerla. There, on the bank of the Candravanka, he tied the cock to a tree.

'O brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I went after the cock. On the way I fought many battles. I fought a man named Dūlāla Poti Reḍḍi and slew him. I fought a certain Cākala Marayālu and slew him as well. I went to Pānugallu. There I offered drink and burnt offerings. The blood flowed for the burnt offerings. I rocked the swing and sang lullabies. I called the cock that was in the vault and brought it here. I am mortally wounded and I can hold on no longer. I am going to Vaikuṇṭha, brother-in-law. Brahma Nāyuḍu!' cried Rāvēlapatār, and he died.

Rāvēlapatār's elder brother, Bāla Gopanna, knew nothing of all that had happened. He did not know that that Brahma Nāyuḍu had set

out to get a cock; he did not know that he had met Rāvēlapatār on the way; he did not know of the fight between Kannama Nīḍu and Rāvēlapatār; he did not know that Brahma Nāyuḍu had made peace between them; he did not know that Rāvēlapatār had brought back the cock. The elder brother knew nothing of what had transpired. Bāla Gopanna assumed that his younger brother was with the herd. He wondered where his younger brother had eaten his meals during the wedding, but he had no intimation of the terrible thing that had happened.

Bāla Gopanna was a Yādava Rāju. These were Velamas, and those were Rājus. It was their custom to beat the war drum for a wedding. It was also their custom to beat the war drum if there was a battle. Brahma Nāyuḍu took the cock wihout sounding the war drum. According to *dharma*, he should have beaten it.[43] He took the cock and tied it up in the Cennakēśvarasvāmi temple. The cock kicked the drum and it roared.

Mācerla and Maṇḍādi are about five miles apart. Bāla Gopanna heard the sound of the war drum. He had donned the sacred marriage thread, and he wore tumeric-covered clothing. He had affixed the marks of Viṣṇu on his forehead, and the wedding was in progress. Then, he heard the 'Gubul! Gubul! Gubul!' of the war drum.

'What can that be? Who can be getting married? There is no marriage scheduled. Who can be going to war? They would not go to war without my knowledge,' thought Bāla Gopanna.

As Bāla Gopanna wondered what was happening, a great soul came and said, 'They say that Rāvēlapatār has brought a cock for Brahma Nāyuḍu who plans to stage a cock fight with Nāyakurālu. Rāvēlapatār brought the cock, but now he is dead. Brahma Nāyuḍu is now setting out for the cock fight.'

Bāla Gopanna flared up wrathfully. He preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened.

'What does he mean by bringing my cock? How did he do it?' he said angrily.

'Bāla Gopanna ripped off the sacred marriage thread; he wiped off the marks of Viṣṇu. The marriage ceremony was only half over, but it stopped there.[44]

'Mother, I am going to the cock fight. You must grant me leave. If they stage the cock fight, let it be so. If not, I will return with the cock,' said Bāla Gopanna to his mother.

'O Father! Bāla Gopanna, I have one request. This is what it is. Śīlamma, Brahma Nāyuḍu's mother, lives in Mācerla. I live in Maṇḍādi. One day she prepared food offerings for Cennakēśvarasvāmi. I

also prepared food. I mounted my palanquin and took the food to Cennakēśvarasvāmi. She also mounted her palanquin and came with food for Cennakēśvarasvāmi. The two palanquins met before the front porch of the temple.

'She said, "O Woman, you are a Yādava and your food is Yādava food. I am Śīlamma, and I am bringing food. Turn your palanquin aside."

'Both of us were resolved that the other should turn her palanquin aside, and we began to argue.

'Śīlamma said, "I have given birth to four sons like elephants."

'I said, "You have given birth to four sons like elephants, but I have given birth to three sons who are like lions. I also have three sons."

'In this vein we argued back and forth. Now if you fight with my quarrel in mind, I will treat your wife, Pēramā Dēvi, as my own daughter. If not, if you fight without doing as I say, I will drive your wife back and forth between Mācerla and Maṇḍādi. I will torment her and bring her to grief. You must fight as I tell you,' said the mother.

'I will do as you say, Mother,' said Bāla Gopanna, and he took leave of his mother.

He went to Mācerla. When he got there, he did not seek out the Seventy-two Clansmen. He did not feel that he had any business with the Seventy-seven Warriors or the Sixty-six Heroes. He went straight to the Cennakēśvarasvāmi temple, opened the lock, and took the cock. Then he went to the assembly hall. Bāla Gopanna did not stop to talk to anyone but when straight to the court.

Brahma Nāyuḍu was amazed and said, 'What is this, Bāla Gopanna? The cock is mine. I'll take care of my own cock. What do you mean by bringing my cock to the court?'

The two glared at each other threateningly.

Then all the elders spoke like this, 'Brahma Nāyuḍu, your patron god is Cennakēśvarasvāmi. Their patron god is also Cennakēśvarasvāmi. Make a five-coloured lotus on the floor of the temple; spread a silk cloth on the lotus; put the cock on the silk cloth; offer cassia and benzoin; and pray to the God. If the cock comes to you, Brahma Nāyuḍu, it is yours. If it goes to Bāla Gopanna, it is his. This will be the proof of ownership. The God will not condone falsehood.'

'O.K., we will do as you say.'

Brahma Nāyuḍu, Bāla Gopanna, and all the elders went to the temple. They purified the floor with cow manure. Brahma Nāyuḍu drew a five-coloured lotus; he spread a silk cloth on the lotus; he placed the cock on the silk cloth; he offered cassia and benzoin.

They prayed to the God saying, 'Father! Cennayya of Mācerla! Śrī

Hari! Ruler of the World! Cennayya of Ayodhya! Protector of Our Souls! Cennayya! Cennayya of Kāceli! Husband of Kānci! Cennayya of Pālamācāpuri! Sacred Syllable! Hari! Cennayya of Mācerla! Our Patron God!'

As the two of them prayed, saying these words, the cock in the lotus ruffled its feathers, crowed loudly, and flew to Bāla Gopanna. Bāla Gopanna took the cock under his arm and started to walk away.

As he started off, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, said, 'It is mine! It is mine!'

'It is mine!' said Bāla Gopanna.

They both said, 'This is not justice. Let us go before Vighnēśvaruḍu[45] of Māḍugula.[46] He is a mighty warrior and very truthful.'

They went there and prayed to Vighnēśvaruḍu. Again the cock went to Bāla Gopanna.

Brahma Nāyuḍu said, 'Father! Bāla Gopanna, the cock is indeed yours. But I have accepted Nāyakurālu's challenge for a cock fight. She is Nāyakurālu of Jiṭṭa Gāmālpāḍu, the beautiful daughter of Caudari Rāmā Reḍḍi, the daughter-in-law of Mēkapōtala Jaggā Reḍḍi. She lives freely in Gāmālapāḍu. It is with this Nāyakurālu that I have agreed to a cock fight. I have accepted the challenge, and the fight must take place. Father, you will hold the cock. Kannama Nīḍu will gird it up and tie on the knives. This is the way we must handle the cock fight.'

'Let it be as you say,' said Bāla Gopanna.

They sent this massage to Nāyakurālu: 'O Woman! Nāyakurālu, we have kept our word and come at the appointed time and place with a cock. You must come for the cock fight.' This was the message that Brahma Nāyuḍu sent.

Then Nāyakurālu assembled the Rājus of Konkana, Tēnkaṇa, Koyalakṣa, Kuluva, Kuntala, Nēpāla, Bangāla, Uhalanki, Di, Tikaram, Mahipān, and Mōharam. She assembled all the Rājus of the fifty-six nations of the world.

The cock in the house was Nāyakurālu's; the cock on the roof was Nāyakurālu's; the cock by the warming fire was Nāyakurālu's; the cock by the mortar was Nāyakurālu's; the cock by the pestle was Nāyakurālu's. Even the eggs and chicks she had acquired before Brahma Nāyuḍu had a chance. She brought all the cocks and kept them either tied up in sacks or hidden in pits. All the cocks were crowing at once. When Brahma Nāyuḍu's cock arrived, it ruffled its feathers and crowed. When it crowed, all the cocks began to die in their tracks. He was Viṣṇu incarnate.

It was Nāyakurālu who girded up her cock and tied on the knives. . . .[47] Then they were ready to fight. Brahma Nāyuḍu possessed the evil eye. He directed his eye towards the cocks. No sooner did Brahma Nāyuḍu look at a cock then all the fight went out of it.

Nāyakurālu looked on with amazement. 'Oh, no! All my cocks are dying. What kind of a cock is that? It has only to crow and my cocks die. You can depend upon Brahma Nāyuḍu to be untrustworthy,' thought Nāyakurālu.

She approached Kannama and said, 'O Son! Kannama!'

'What is it, Woman? What do you want?'

'Father! Kannama, what does your father love about all else? What gives him the greatest pleasure?' she said.

'My father is Viṣṇu incarnate. Brahma Nāyuḍu. He dearly loves devotees of Hari,' said Kannama.

When she heard this, Nāyakurālu called three heralds. She had all three of their heads shaved. She gave them conch, bell, mendicant's pouch, and banner pole.

'Hariyō! Hariyō! Harī!' they said, making sounds like devotees of Hari. They approached Brahma Nāyuḍu from the rear saying, 'Gōvinda! Gōvinda! Gōvinda! Hari! Hari! Hari! Hariyō! Harī!' The conches sounded 'Boom! Boom! Boom!' as they approached him from behind as devotees of Viṣṇu.

'What is this? This is a battle; I am engaged in a cock fight. It seems that some devotees of Hari have come to watch the cock fight,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu, and he turned around.

When he looked away, the wizards from Kaṭṭubōtu Gangavaram[48] approached. They were casters of spells and masters of mantras, Śākinis and Ḍākinis.[49]

'Come Kaha Kaha Karpari; come Dun Eyed One; come Tiger [Rider]; come Snake Ornamented One; come Mutyāla; come Golden One; come Cholera; come Kāteri.'

These were the powers that Nāyakurālu summoned along with the masters of mantras and casters of spells, Śākinis and Ḍākanis. All of these came and pounced on Brahma Nāyuḍu's cock.

Brahma Nāyuḍu saw them pouncing on his cock. Being Viṣṇu incarnate, he was able to see uninterruptedly behind himself. He is beyond description, the seer of the human world, Viṣṇu incarnate. They did not realize this.

He prayed to Cennakēśvarasvāmi, saying, 'Cennayya of Mācerla! Our Patron God! Rāma! Cennayya of Ayodhya! Protector of our Souls! Cennayya of Kāceli! Husband of Kānci! Have mercy on us and protect us, Master of Demons.'

He also called on Goddess Ankālaparamēśvari, saying, 'Nakṣatra-vīramaṇḍali! Nāgabhayankari! Kāsulakaṭāri! Kanakanivāli! Ōmkāri! Mahāmkāḷi! Bhadramankāḷi! Ammayya!'[50]

He called on Goddess Ganga, saying, 'Mistress of the Oil Pot! Ganga of Foam! Mistress of the Milk Pot! Bhagīratha Ganga.'[51]

He praised his patron God, Śambhumūrti, saying, 'Gaurī Manōhara! Gangōttamānga! Nāgakankaṇa! Śiva! Nandivāhanuḍu! Śankara! Ghanagajāsurabhanga! Kāmabhasmānga! Lalitaśitagandhara! Layakālakarta! Īśvara! Sakalabhūtēśvara! Sarabhāvatāra! Phālākṣi! Bhūtēśa! Paramēśa! Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sāmbhaśiva!'[52]

Both eyes of Brahma Nāyuḍu's cock were put out. When this happened, the cock flew into the air.

'O Elder Brother! Bāla Gopanna, are you going to abandon me to my enemies?' said the cock, deeply grieved.

Bāla Gopanna saw the cock fly into the sky. He grasped his weapon tightly in his hand. He preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened; he gnashed his teeth; his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit.

As Bāla Gopanna brandished his weapon, the cock landed on the blade. The cock was cut in half. Seeing this, red blood spouted out of Bāla Gopanna's eyes. Beside himself with rage, he shook violently.

Then he held Brahma Nāyuḍu fixed firmly in his mind and said, 'O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, this is all your illusion. You have concocted all this.'

When he had spoken, Bāla Gopanna rose up by the . . . hill and began hewing away as if cutting down a forest. He clashed with Nāyakurālu's forces, and they fought a terrible, terrible battle. Like Rāma and Rāvaṇa duelling, like Vāli and Sugrīva wrangling, he clashed with the armies of Nāyakurālu. As they raged and battled, heads fell to the earth. Heads lay gaping about; heaps of fat flesh piled up; blackened severed heads were strewn about.

He clashed with Nāyakurālu's armies. He fought like a tiger pouncing on cattle in the forest. While he fought, comets filled the heavens, and the sky reddened. This was the manner of Bāla Gopanna's battling. It was a war of *dharma* that he fought.

The way Nāyakurālu's soldiers fled was this: some climbed ant hills; some fled to towns; some climbed trees; some were cut off; some were tangled up; and some let down their hair.

As he fought, Bāla Gopanna said, 'Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! O Sāmbhaśiva, I am fighting a battle according to *dharma*. He who climbs an anthill is equal to Ādiśeṣa; he must

not be struck. He who hides his face in the grass is equal to a cow; he must not be struck. This is a battle according to *dharma*. He who flees and climbs a tree is equal to a bat; he must not be struck. I am fighting, and I will continue to fight, a battle according to *dharma*. He who loosens his hair on the battlefield is equal to a *piśāci*, a spirit. There is nothing to be gained from cutting up such people. Why should I unjustly wage war on such men? It is against all the laws.

Where is Narasinga Rāju? Where has he gone? Hey there! Where are you hiding, Narasinga Rāju, Nalagāma Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju? Why have you fled from this encounter? Come out! Come, Bangālā Rāju'[53]

Hearing the call, Bangālā Rāju knew that he could not avoid the encounter. He clashed with Bāla Gopanna and they fought a terrible, terrible battle. As they fought, Bāla Gopanna threw Bangālā Rāju to the earth. Then taking his dagger, he carved off the Rāju's head.

Nearby was an *āre* tree. He set up three *lingas* against it. Worshipping the *lingas*, he placed the Rāju's head before them and did obeisance.

'Speak! Speak! Speak, Bangālā Rāju,' he said.

The entire army fled to Gangavaram of the wizards.

Now Bāla Gopanna had been sorely wounded by many weapons. The sun, which had risen in the east, reached the Gaṇḍa Island in the west.

Mortally wounded, Bāla Gopanna went to the bank of the Candravanka and cried out, 'O Father! Brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu! Nāyuḍu! Brahma Nāyuḍu! Narasimhamūrti! Lōkapāvana! Jagadbarita! Protect me, Bhārgava. Brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, my younger brother, the cock, is dead. I too have fought a terrible battle and slain all of Nāyakurālu's armies. Only grant me your leave, and I will enter Vaikuṇṭha.'

'O Father, Bāla Gopanna, I will restore you to life. I will make you live,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'O Brother-in-law, I have fought enough battles. The deeds I have done are sufficient. I want nothing more. I want nothing to do with leftover life,'[54] said Bāla Gopanna to Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Brahma Nāyuḍu took the *tulasi* necklace from his neck and sent Bāla Gopanna to Vaikuṇṭha. On the banks of the Candravanka, they made his tomb.

This ends the story of Nāyakurālu and the cock fight.

NOTES

1 The mothers and their children are as follows: *no children*: Būramā Dēvi; *several sons*: Mailamā Dēvi; *three Malidēva Rājus*: Vīravidyala Dēvi. The meaning of the boys' names are: *Cinna*, younger; *Pedda*, elder; *Bāla*, baby.

2 *Pondugula-Vāḍapalli*: Villages about 10 miles north-northeast of Gurajāla. Pondugula is on the right bank of the Kriṣṇa and Vāḍapalli is on the left bank in Miryālagūḍa Tāluk, Nalgoṇḍa District.

3 *Gāmālapāḍu*: Same as Jiṭṭa Gāmālapāḍu, it lies about 8 miles north-east of Gurajāla.

4 *lotus-eyed*: A very common figure of speech in Indian literature, especially in descriptions of royal personages.

5 The names of these Reḍḍis are chosen for their alliterative relationship with the names of the towns and villages they rule. None of them are developed as individual characters.

6 *gadiya*: A measure of time equal to 24 minutes.

7 *twelve Vaiṣṇava marks to his body*: A full-grown devotee of Viṣṇu is supposed to wear twelve sectarian marks on designated parts of his body.

8 *glass pillar*: *gāju stambhamu* is mentioned several times in the epic, but no information as to its significance is available. It is probably ornamental.

9 *Vaikuṇṭha*: Viṣṇu's heaven.

10 Gāleyya's mind appears to have wandered here. In other sources, as well as by his own reckoning, elsewhere in the epic and in conversations, the wives and their offspring are as in note 1.

11 *ninety-nine villages of Mācerla . . . ninety-nine villages of Gurajāla*: probably poetic exaggeration; there are now ninety-five villages in all of Palnāḍu, according to the census of 1971, and it is unlikely that there were more in the past.

12 *Vikramārka*: Another name for Vikramāditya, a monarch who is said to have ruled over much of Northern India soon after the time of Christ and to have finally met his death at the hand of Sālivāhana, king of the South. Stories of Vikramārka are popular in Telugu folklore, and cheap editions of stories about him are readily available wherever books are sold.

13 *interdiction*: *āna*, literally is an oath, but in oral literature it is used almost exclusively in the negative sense as a prohibition in the name of a God, elder, etc. It is usually accompanied by the physical drawing of a line that is not to be crossed.

14 *Cerlagudipāḍu*: A village about 4 miles south of Gurajāla.

15 Gāleyya slips and says 'Younger Brother' instead of 'Elder Brother'.

16 This is a repeat of 'The Story of Peddanna', emphasizing different aspects of the story as they are important in the present context.

17 The marks enumerated are all auspicious. Some are associated with Viṣṇu and some with Śiva. *chowry*: a yak-tail whisk used as a mark of honour, *śrīvaikuṇṭham*: apparently a representation of Viṣṇu's heaven, Vaikuṇṭha. *philosopher's stone*: *parasavēdi*; *wonderful eye on his forehead*: the third eye of Śiva; *rudrākṣa*: lit. 'eye of Rudra', it is a kind of seed worn as a necklace by followers of Śiva.

18 *nowhere . . . bride for him*: Other sources suggest that this was because the neighbouring Rājus knew him to be born a Velama. See Sewell, *Antiquarian Remains*, Appendix I, p. 111.

19 *Angavaram*: probably Angalūru, Vinukoṇḍa Tāluk, Guṇṭūr District.

20 *Kamma*: One of the great agricultural castes in the Telugu country. It, like Reḍḍi, is a division of the Kāpu caste.

21 *ninth month of pregnancy*: The gestation period of a horse is, of course, eleven months, but horses are not common in the area and the singer would be more familiar with the gestation period of cattle and humans, both of which are nine months.

22 *Wedded Wife*; *kulasati*, lit. a wife from one's own caste. Also, the wife who is recognized by the family, as distinct from any other consort.

23 *The turban from his head . . . into the sky*: This passage is unclear, and the translation is tentative. The story gives the origin of the slate rock on the dike, even though in doing so it has to conflict with the passage below where Peddanna releases his turban to pick up his wife.

24 *Brahmātma . . . Gārudadhrijahā*: Sanskrit prayers to Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, following Gāleyya's own grammatical inclinations.

25 *That night they arrived at Pānugallu . . . kuccelas wide*: Pānugallu was an important fort under the Kākatiyas during the epic period. It is now a division of the town of Nalgoṇḍa, the headquarters of Nalgoṇḍa District. *circling to the right*: *pradakṣiṇam*: circumambulation such as is done around a temple. *Nālam's moat*: Nālamavāri Cilaka. 'Nālam' seems to be a family name. The meaning of the word *cilaka* is not clear. It may be a well, lake, canal, or, as I have chosen to call it, a moat. The dictionaries do not give any meanings that seem to fit. But one, 'the rim of a wheel', is suggestive. Pānugallu was famous for a large tank, and it may be this tank that is meant. *kuccela*: a measure of land equal to about 30 acres (varying from place to place), here seemingly used as a measure of distance or extent.

26 *As he . . . Gautama*: In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Gautama curses his wife, Ahalyā, who is later restored to her original form by the touch of Rāma's foot. A version of the origin of this cock is found in Śrīnathuḍu, *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, 1961, pp. 542–3, where it is taken from Mudigoṇḍa Vīrabhadra Kavi, *Vīra Bhāgavatam*. 'By the curse of a sage, three thieves were changed into chicken eggs under an indigo root in a forest. A Cencu [hill tribe] king took them home and kept them in his house. One egg rotted, and Gopanna was born. The second egg hatched into a female chick, but died at once, and Pērādēvi [Pēramā Dēvi, Gopanna's wife] was born. The third egg grew up to be a cock. That was Ciṭṭi Malluḍu [this cock]. One day sixty-six princes came to the forest to hunt and Ciṭṭi Malluḍu slew both them and their hunting falcons. The princes and their wives were burned on the pyre. Seeing this, the Cencu king was afraid of Ciṭṭi Malluḍu and put the cock in a hollow tree. After some time the cock slowly made its way under a slab called Śanaiścaruḍu [Saturn]. There he was found by Peddanna.'

There are other interesting stories involving a cock at Pānugallu: 'It was in the 11th Century A.D. that the Cholas prospered and ruled over vast tracts of Andhra with governor's headquarters at . . . Panagal. After the fall of Thailapadeva, Udayaraju, the governor at Panagal, declared independence in 1157. Udayaraju was a Jain and hated the veerasaivas. Namayya was a Veerasaiva in Kaliyuga. Unable to withstand the torture from Udayaraju, Namayya hanged himself to death. Panditharadhya cursed the King and left Panagal. The following is an extract from *Panditharadhya Charitra* by Palakuriki Somanatha:

"kādinka nīpānugaṭa nuṇḍagan
hā dēvubhaktula kanucu gaṭṭuluka
masalaka paṇḍita mallikārjunuḍu
vesadanarpaka burikeḍalanga venuka
nakkajambuga pūcenanta galponna
kukkarō kurrani gūse galkōḍi
purimahōtpātamul puṭṭe veṇḍiyunu"

After Mallikharjuna Panditaradhya had left Panagal, the stone ponna tree flowered the stone cock crew and subsequently great mishaps occurred in that place. Kalponna (stone ponna) and kalkodi (stone cock) were signs of Chola rule and it was the belief of those days that the stone tree would flower and the stone cock would crow foreboding a catastrophe.' Republic of India, *Census of India, 1961. Vol. II. Andhra Pradesh. Part VII–B (20). Fairs and Festivals (20. Nalgonda District)*. (Hyderabad, 1964) pp. 7–8.

The stone cock of Pānugallu is also mentioned in Vinukoṇḍu Vallabharāya, *Krīḍābhirāmamu*, p. 54. Two fighting cocks are compared to the great stone cock of Pānugallu.

27 *Rājus of the sixty-six cities*: Note the 'sixty-six princes' in the note above.

28 *Maṇḍādi*: A village about 5 miles south of Mācerla.

29 *Umanābādu*: A town about 15 miles from Kalyāṇ in Bīdar District, Karnātaka. Often spelt 'Humnābād'.

30 *Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju . . . Kâma Rāju*: These names are elsewhere given as the names of the younger brothers of Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju who are not supposed to have come with the group from Kalyān. As Guṇḍina Boyya and Jaṭṭiṇḍa Boyya are said to have come from Kalyāṇ with Komma Rāju, it is possible that they are meant and Gāleyya only mixed up his formulas. If so, he seems to have done the same thing elsewhere in this story where he lists the men who are the equals of the man who incarnated as the cock.

31 *Āvālavāru . . . Palapartivāru*: A rare instance of a passage in Gāleyya's version being identical with one in Piṅgaḷi Lakṣmikāntam's *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, see pp. 297–8.

32 *broadsword*: *bhairava*.

33 *vēpa*: margosa. I do not know why this is associated with craziness, except for the alliteration with 'verri' (mad, foolish, nonsensical, etc.).

34 *Pālamācāpuri*: Gāleyya means 'Kalyāṇ'.

35 Omitted are three or four obscure lines in an archaic form describing how Rāvēlapatār sped along. I have not found it possible to transliterate them.

36 *Rāju*: The term here seems to be used in the more general sense of a ruler, prince, lord, etc. The Reḍḍis never claim Ksatriya status and are not of the Rāju caste.

37 *Dūlāla Poti Reḍḍi*: The family name 'Dūlālu' is derived from the plural of the word 'dūlamu', meaning a beam or timber.

38 *went to sleep*: Meaning 'he died'.

39 *Cākala Marayālu*: This is not a proper name but a polite way of addressing a member of the washerman caste. 'Cākala' is the name of the caste, and 'Marayālu' is a polite addition.

40 *Gaurīmanōharu . . . Sarabhāvatāra*, epithets of Śiva. They are found here just as in Piṅgaḷi Lakṣmikāntam, ed., *Palnāṭivīracaritra*, p. 299.

41 In the 'Sabhāparva' of the *Mahābhārata*, Jarāsandha, a king who originated as two half-children, is slain by Bhīma. In Telugu folk versions, when Bhīma tries to slay him by cutting him in two pieces, the pieces come back together and he is restored to wholeness. Krishṇa advises Bhīma to throw the two halves in the opposite direction just as Rāvēlapatār is here advised by Nārada Brahma.

42 *pānakamu*: A drink made of sugar and water. The offerings are apparently to the local Goddess of Pānugallu, since they are of the type usually reserved for such Goddesses.

43 i.e. according to the Rāju's *dharma* he should have beaten it.

44 The theme of a hero leaving his marriage ceremony when it is half over to go and fight a battle in which he will die is found in another popular heroic story in Telugu and Tamil, *Dēśingu Rāju Katha*.

45 *Vighnēśvaruḍu*: Ganeśa, the elephant-headed God. He is usually known by the name 'Vināyakuḍu' in this area.

46 *Mādugula*: A village between Gurajāla and Mācerla.

47 I have omitted two half-sentences here where Gāleyya was attempting to catch the thread of what he wanted to say.

48 *Kaṭṭubōtu Gangavaram*: Gangavaram of the Wizards. Gangavaram borders Gurajāla on the north and is sometimes called Kaṭṭubōtu Gangavaram.

49 Śākinis and *Ḍākinis*: According to Brown, they are 'fairies and elves; imps and goblins'. They are most likely to be found on a battlefield.

50 *Nakṣatravīramanḍali*: Heroic Assembly of the Stars; *Nāgabhayamkari*: Who Causes the Serpents to Fear; *Kāsulakaṭāri*: (Malicious Dagger?); *Kanakanivāli*: (Golden One?); *Ōmkāri*: Maker of the Sound 'Ōm'; *Mahāmkāḷi*: Great Destroyer; *Bhadramankāḷi*: Blessed Destroyer; *Ammayya*: Mother. The meaning in such recitations is of secondary importance; they are used for their sound value.

51 *Bhagīrathi Ganga*: Ganga was brought to the earth by the efforts of the king, Bhagīratha.

52 Epithets of Śiva.

53 *Bangāla Rāju*: A Rāju slain and sacrificed by Bālacandruḍu on his way to the great battle at Kārempūḍi. The mention of him here, out of context, and the description of the slaying and sacrifice seem to be either a mistake on Gāleyya's part or else an effort to make Bāla Gopanna's battle even more important. It seems to be a case of repeating a formula in a questionable context.

54 *left over life: engili prāṇam. Engili*: n., spittle, defiled food leavings; adj., defiled, nasty. The sense is that Brahma Nāyuḍu is offering a handout to the dead warrior. As a warrior, he wants only what he is able to win by the strength of his own arm.

Story 10

The Birth and Marriage of Bāluḍu*

The barren sisters-in-law. Cennakēśvara's boon. Aitamma shares her portion with women of other castes. The inauspicious birth of Bāluḍu and his 'brothers'. Brahma Nāyuḍu orders Bāluḍu cast into the sea. Pēr Nīḍu rescues and nurtures the boys. Brahma Nāyuḍu has Bāluḍu killed. The Rājus order him to restore the boy to life. The marriage negotiations. Bāluḍu and Māncāla are married.

Five sisters-in-law are childless: Mutyālakomma, wife of Peddanna; Sūramma Dēvi, wife of Sūr Nīḍu; and Gauramma, wife of Pēr Nīḍu.[1] They pray to many gods, visit many temples, and give gifts to holy men, but still they do not conceive. At last the sisters-in-law decide to ask the help of their mother-in-law, Śīlamma.

Śīlamma advises her daughters-in-law to call on their patron God, Cennakēśvara. She tells them to go to a certain old elephant lime[2] tree, to water it with water from the Candravanka, and to offer it benzoin and cassia. The tree will yield three fruits which they should pick and offer to Cennakēśvara by putting one on each shoulder and one on his head. If Cennakēśvara is pleased, he will return one of the fruits and bless them.

When the women do as Śīlamma advises, Cennakēśvara decides to test their devotion and manifests in the tree. The elephant lime tree shakes, quivers, spins round, and falls to the earth. Seeing this, Aitamma is sorely grieved and vows to behead herself if the tree does not stand up again.

As the women are about to behead themselves, Cennakēśvara, not wishing to be guilty of their deaths, makes the tree stand up, grow buds, and produce fruit. Taking the three fruits, they place them on gold plates and go to the Cennakēśvara temple where they put one lime on each of the idol's shoulders and one on his head. The idol which was facing east spins round to the west.[3]

Angrily Aitamma accuses Cennakēśvara of not treating them with compassion. Again the women threaten to behead themselves. Con-

*Detailed summary.

vinced of their devotion, Cennakēśvara turns to the east and promises to grant them a boon. Aitamma places a gold plate in front of the idol, and Cennayya rolls a lime off his head on to the plate.

Aitamma takes the fruit, and with the shears she has in her hands,[4] she cuts it into five pieces. Each of the women receive a piece. The four, assuming that whoever eats her piece first will be blessed, quickly eat their portions. Aitamma waits and asks who else wishes to share her portion.

Six women come forward to share the fruit. They are a Kummari (potter), Kammari (blacksmith), Cākala (washerman), Kansali (goldsmith), and a Brāhmaṇ.[5] Aitamma divides her portion into seven pieces and serves the women, keeping one for herself. The women do obeisance to Cennakēśvara and eat the fruit.

The four sisters-in-law who ate theirs first do not conceive, but the seven conceive by the grace of God. Today a pregnancy lasts nine months, but these women give birth after only nine hours. At midnight on Monday in the month of Kārtika, the seven women deliver. All seven give birth to boys. Aitamma's son, for whom she has waited so long, is perfect in every way, like the full moon or Manmatha.[6] The other boys are equally perfect, and the house is filled with the sounds of babies.

The elders of Palnāḍu are at the court when they receive Aitamma's message announcing the birth of a son. They are delighted by the news, but Brahma Nāyuḍu is plagued by troubled thoughts. When they ask Brahma Nāyuḍu why he does not share their joy, he tells them that he does not yet know what the child's horoscope foretells. Brāhmaṇ astrologers are summoned to the court, called by Kannama.

The Brāhmaṇ astrologers examine the almanac to see what it foretells for the boy. But they are unable to understand what they see. Cennayya has intervened and confused them.

Cennayya assumes the guise of an aged Brāhmaṇ and approaches from behind. Noticing the old Brāhmaṇ, Brahma Nāyuḍu and the rest pay him respect. He says he is from Kāśī and on his way to Kāñci. Having heard that the men of Palnāḍu are men of great merit and generosity, he has come for food, clothing, and whatever they choose to bestow upon him.

The Brāhmaṇ is given a seat of honour, and being asked to reveal what the child's stars foretell, he opens the almanac and examines it. Fearful that the assembly will turn against him, he at first refuses to reveal what he has seen. He asks if they really want to know what is foretold and demands that they promise not to beat him if they do not like what they hear. He warns that it will be Brāhmacide if they kill

him, a lone old Brāhmaṇ. The elders promise not to beat him, no matter what he says.

Then Cennayya, the old Brāhmaṇ, opens the almanac and reveals what it says. The child has been born on the eighth lunar day, in the same hour that Lord Kriṣṇa was born.[7] He will bring about the destruction of his mother, father, aunts, uncles, mother-in-law, and all the people of Palnāḍu. He is destined by Cennakēśvara, at the age of fourteen, to destroy all of Palnāḍu, causing the death of the Seventy-seven Clansmen on the banks of the Nāgulēru.

Hearing these dire predictions, the people leap up and begin beating and reviling the Brāhmaṇ. But Brahma Nāyuḍu intervenes and calms them down, warning them against killing a Brāhmaṇ. He asks the Brāhmaṇ what can be done to avoid the destruction that has been foretold.

Cennayya, in the guise of the Brāhmaṇ, warns them that the boy must not be killed. He instructs Brahma Nāyuḍu to tell the Viśvabrāmaṇs to construct a seven-cubit chest, lined with gold and silk. In the chest are to be placed provisions to sustain the child for six months. The chest must be put on Kannama's head, and he must set out at twilight, take it to the sea, and throw it in. In this way, Bāluḍu himself will nullify, by his death, the baleful influence of his own evil stars.

Brahma Nāyuḍu sends Kannama to get the child. Aitamma swoons when she hears why he has come. She has waited so long for this beautiful child. At last, with much weeping, she gives the baby to Kannama.

At the court, the Brāhmaṇs take the baby and bathe it in the Candravanka. The ground is purified with cow dung and a five-coloured lotus is drawn. In the middle of the lotus is spread a silk cloth and the baby is placed upon it. On one side they put money; on one side they put bright red fruit; on one side they put grain; on the final side, they lay weapons of war. The elders, as instructed by the Brāhmaṇ, offer cassia and benzoin, doing obeisance.

Bāluḍu kicks his legs and cries out. Ignoring the grain, money, and fruit, he directs his attention to the weapons and horse and looks fiercely at the Seventy-two Clansmen.[8]

Now the people know that the Brāhmaṇ has spoken truthfully. Their hearts break with the knowledge of what this child will do. Again they ask what must be done, and the Brāhmaṇ repeats his instructions. Then he disappears.

Bāluḍu cries as the chest is placed on Kannama's head. The people cry as he sets out, weeping for the child who is being abandoned by his father and mother. Kannama himself weeps and swoons, but Brahma

Nāyuḍu steadfastly repeats the order to take the boy and throw him in the ocean.

In the darkness, Kannama departs from Mācerla on the path to Tundapalli-Rāyavaram. Passing Rāyavaram he goes on to Durgi and thence to Oppicerla. After Oppicerla he comes to Cintapalli and enters the terrible darkness of the forest in which wild animals abound. But Kannama is fearless. He passes Jūlakallu and Guttikoṇḍa-Jānapāḍu. Between Nemalipalli and Nakarikallu,[9] he pauses to rest at a relay post.

Kannama puts down the chest. He has not paused since he left Macerla, and the baby has had nothing to eat since then. The baby has not made a sound. Thinking it may be dead, and seeing no reason to go all the way to the ocean if it is, he decides to leave the chest in the forest where some beast can devour the child. Putting his weapons on the chest, Kannama begins to walk away. But turning back, he sits and weeps for the poor child.

Pēr Nīḍu is keeping a dancing girl in the city of Candavōlu.[10] Her name is Pamalinca Bāmasāni. The distance between Candavōlu and Mācerla is seven *amadas*.[11] Habitually, Pēr Nīḍu leaves Mācerla during the first watch of the night. During the second, he is on the road. The third watch he spends with Pamalinca Bāmasāni. During the fourth, he is again on the road, arriving in Mācerla at dawn. He is a man of Palnāḍu and travels with the speed of the wind. His wife knows of the affair, but no one else knows.

Pēr Nīḍu hears Kannama calling to his younger brother. Thinking it is either a spirit or a man who is going to attack him, Pēr Nīḍu unsheaths his weapon and demands that the other identify himself, asking if he is an alien armed attendant. Since he is weeping, Kannama hears only the end of what Pēr Nīdu says. Incensed to think that anyone would consider him a foreign armed attendant, he is determined to learn the intruder's caste and fight him. Kannama demands that Pēr Nīḍu identify himself and threatens to kill him for his words.

Hearing this brave retort, Pēr Nīḍu knows he is not dealing with a stranger but a man of Palnāḍu. He demands to know who he is about to fight.

Kannama responds with the full lineage of Alugu Rāju and his minister, Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu. He then identifies himself as a Māla caste devotee of Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Pēr Nīḍu gives his own lineage, ending by calling himself Śīlamma Pērayya.[12]

Now the two recognize each other and Pēr Nīḍu asks Kannama why he is there. Kannama tells all that has happened. Pēr Nīḍu listens to

the story and then tries to open the chest. But it has been sealed by Brahma Nāyuḍu, and it does not open. Angrily, Pēr Nīḍu hacks it with his sword. The lid comes off and the child awakens, lighting up the whole dark forest. Pēr Nīḍu weeps for the child who has been rejected by his parents.

Announcing that he is going to take the child home, Pēr Nīḍu charges Kannama to tell no one what has happened. He will return by a different path lest anyone see him in the morning light. Kannama agrees, and the men promise to keep the secret for seven plus seven, fourteen years.

As Pēr Nīḍu sets off with the child, Kannama calls him back and asks what is to become of the other six boys who were born of the same fruit, under the same stars. Pēr Nīḍu says he will bring them up as well and asks Kannama to bring them to his house.

Meanwhile, Gauramma is worried because her husband has not come home at his usual time. Fearing that he has lost his life in a battle or to a wild beast, she weeps. Pēr Nīḍu arrives at the gate and calls to his wife. When she opens the door and sees the bundle, she first thinks it is some fruit from the path or a gift for her from the courtesan. She takes the baby on a golden plate and is charged by her husband to nurture it with care.

Gauramma swoons. She is barren and has no milk. She asks that the child be given to someone in the city who has breasts full of milk. Bāluḍu hears what she says and is angry at her because she wants to dispose of him. Pēr Nīḍu then tells his wife what to do. He says she must make a likeness of Bāluḍu and a garland of onion.[13] After doing this, she must pray to Cennakēśvara.

By the grace of Cennayya, drops of milk form on Gauramma's nipples, and her breasts become full. She gives the teat to Bāluḍu, but the baby remembers that she tried to give him away and is angry. As Kriṣṇa sucked out Pūtana's blood through her breasts,[14] Bāluḍu also sucks vigorously. Gauramma swoons. Then, wondering, she nurses him.

Meanwhile, Kannama goes to the Candravanka and sits under the banyan tree. The six sisters, daughters of a Kummari, Kammari, Cākala, Mangala and Brāhmaṇ,[15] come to the banks of the river. They know that their children have been born under the same baleful star as Bāluḍu, and they are determined to leave their offspring on the bank of the Candravanka where the river will rise up and take them away.

Kannama asks them why they have come. When they explain, he insists that he should do with these as he did with their brother, Bāluḍu. Taking the babies, he goes to Pēr Nīḍu's house. Gauramma is

afraid that she will not be capable of handling all seven, but her husband assures her that he will supply a maidservant for each child. Gauramma need only supervise and see that each child is given due attention.

When the boys are seven years old they are instructed in the various arts.

One day the elders are sitting in the assembly hall. Among them is Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu. His wife, Gaṇḍa Rēkhamma, having completed a vow to Garuṭmantuḍu, is about to take the offering to the court to distribute it among the elders. But her daughter, Māncāla, insists that she be allowed to do so.

Little Māncāla serves Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, the three Malidēva Rājus, Brahma Nāyuḍu, and the rest in their proper order. Last of all, she serves her father, Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu.

Pleased with his daughter's cleverness, Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu says that if Brahma Nāyuḍu's son were alive, he would have his daughter married to the boy.[16] Hearing this, Pēr Nīḍu rises up and announces that the child is alive. He is determined to make Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu stand by his word. But no one believes that Bāluḍu is really alive.

Sending an attendant to his house, Pēr Nīḍu asks that the seven boys be brought to the court. Gauramma is stricken with grief when she hears the messenger's mission, but she prepares a fine dinner for the boys, dresses them, and sends them to the court.

The boys are not familiar with anyone else in the court and go straight to Pēr Nīḍu. Bāluḍu sits on Pēr Nīḍu's right thigh, the Brāhmaṇ boy sits on his left, and the others stand around his chair.

Brahma Nāyuḍu is amazed and displeased. He demands that Kannama give him an explanation. Kannama tells Brahma Nāyuḍu everything that transpired, and how Pēr Nīḍu raised the children.

Brahma Nāyuḍu responds by having Kannama bring the sixty-six contenders[17] to the court with their swords, weapons, and cart.

Brahma Nāyuḍu orders the contenders to seize Bāluḍu and tie him to the cart with silk ropes. When they have done so, they are to parade through the streets, taking Bāluḍu to the Candravanka. Once there, they are to hew him to pieces on the grass.

The contenders start to do as Brahma Nāyuḍu orders them. But they weep as they seize the boy and they tremble as they pull him along. It is Bāluḍu's elder brothers[18] who drag him along.

Bāluḍu looks at Pēr Nīḍu, asking if he is going to allow this to happen after all these years. Pēr Nīḍu's love is the strong love of a parent who has raised a child. It is stronger that that of a blood parent. He swoons. He pulls his beard, begging the contenders to allow the

boy to live. He begs them to wait while he intercedes with Brahma Nāyuḍu.

But Brahma Nāyuḍu drives his brother away and will not listen to his entreaties. Pēr Nīḍu cannot stand up to his brother. He swoons and falls to the ground, calling the name of his adopted son.

The contenders tie Bāluḍu to the cart and parade him through the city.

Bāluḍu was born of Cennayya's boon, and Cennayya has protected him. He beseeches Cennakēśvara to protect him now. Cennakēśvara appears on the cart. Bāluḍu turns from east to the west. The silk fetters that bind him on the east are torn. He turns back to the east, and the fetters on the west are torn.

The contenders tell Brahma Nāyuḍu what has happened. Again Bāluḍu is secured with new cords, and again he is paraded around the city. Taking him to the grass by the river, the contenders raise their weapons. But Cennakēśvara intervenes and the weapons will not make the downward stroke. Throwing down their weapons, the contenders tell Bāluḍu that he is free to go.

Bāluḍu warns that for his life Brahma Nāyuḍu will take their sixty-six lives. But even to save their own lives, they cannot kill him.

Bāluḍu instructs them what to do. They plant their weapons in the ground with the points upwards. Bāluḍu calls on Ankālamma, jumps off the cart, and dances on the sharp points. Then, leaping high into the air, he comes down, putting out his eyes. His body is riddled with the many weapons. Red blood and white blood flow like rivers. He is mortally wounded and the life is about to depart from his eyes.

Hearing what has happened, Pēr Nīḍu weeps and knows he must find someone to restore life to the boy. The first among them are the Rājus, Brahma Nāyuḍu is the minister. Pēr Nīḍu beseeches the Rājus to intervene.

The Rājus order Brahma Nāyuḍu to restore life to the dead child.[19] Unable to ignore the command, Brahma Nāyuḍu has Bāluḍu brought to the court. By this time the life has gone out of him. Purifying the ground with cow dung and drawing a lotus with the five colours, Brahma Nāyuḍu spreads a silk cloth and places the dead child on it. Then whispering words of power in the boy's ear, he annoints him with water in the name of Cennayya and Śankara.

At Brahma Nāyuḍu's touch, the sixty-six wounds become sixty-six birthmarks. When Brahma Nāyuḍu puts his *tulasi* necklace on the boy, he rises up.

Bāluḍu berates his father for the trouble he has caused him. But Brahma Nāyuḍu only laughs. The dictates of fate cannot be avoided.

Hearing what has happened, Pēr Nīḍu brings the boy to his grieving

wife. Gauramma takes him back and assures him that everything is all right. Bāluḍu has died, but Brahma Nāyuḍu has restored him to life.

Here begins the story of Bāluḍu's marriage.

Pēr Nīḍu takes Bāluḍu to the court and informs Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu that it is time for Bāluḍu and Māncāla to be married. But Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu chooses to doubt that Bāluḍu really is who he is claimed to be. The prospective father-in-law suggests that anyone might have abandoned a child on the road to Candavōlu. Pēr Nīḍu, being without offspring, might then have picked him up.

Pēr Nīḍu challenges Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu before the court. He challenges him to keep his promise to marry his daughter to Bāluḍu, threatening to kill him if he does not. Unable to refute what Pēr Nīḍu has said, Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu agrees that the children should be married, but only on the condition that the boy's real mother prove her affection for him.

Pēr Nīḍu goes to Aitamma and requests her to come to the court. For seven years she has had no milk in her breasts. When she calls on Cennakēśvara, droplets of milk form on her nipples, and her breasts are filled with milk. Aitamma goes to Bāluḍu, hugging and caressing him affectionately.

Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu is Aitamma's blood-brother. When she insists that he give his daughter to Bāluḍu, Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu cannot refuse. It is the most desirable kind of alliance. But he demands that Aitamma give him as much wealth as he desires. He asks for twelve *tūmas* of gold coin by the tax collector's measure.

Aitamma chides her brother for his greed. They are both wealthy and each has only one child.[20] Breaking open the storehouses, she calls Rāma and Lakṣmana[21] to count out the gold coin. Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu complains that it is not her money that she is giving, but the spoils Brahma Nāyuḍu took at the battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla. He wants as many gold coins as the sticks and empty fruit that fall. For, says Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu, rupees are but twigs and empty fruit.

When the twigs and empty fruit are counted, they equal twelve *tūmas* of gold coin. Still it is not enough for Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu. He demands a threshing-floor and a palm grove. Aitamma agrees, and the deal is settled.

Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu announces to the elders that he will have the marriage celebrated for five days in his house, at his expense. Aitamma insists that it will be celebrated for nine days in her house at her expense. She will even feed the people of the surrounding villages. Neither is ready to give in to the other, and the marriage negotiations break down.

Cennakēśvara sees what has happened. Once again assuming the guise of an old Brāhmaṇ, he goes to Aitamma's house and reminds her of the baleful stars under which Bāluḍu was born. He suggests that the wedding be not held in either house but between the two. He further advises that a pillar be erected between the two houses with each house sharing equally in the expense. Aitamma agrees.

Next, the Brāhmaṇ goes to Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu's house and identifies himself as Nārāyaṇadās of the Vaikuṇṭha clan. He says he is on his way to Kāśī. Hearing of Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu's daughter's marriage and knowing the fame of the Palnāḍu people, he has come for food. He warns Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu's wife not to allow her daughter to be married in her own house. After explaining how the marriage should take place, Cennakēśvara disappears.

Both Brahma Nāyuḍu and Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu contribute to the expenses. A great marriage platform is constructed and a banyan seedling is planted to mark the spot.

At the auspicious time, as determined by the Brāhmaṇs, Bāluḍu comes dressed as a bridegroom on a richly caparisoned elephant. He is accompanied by Aitamma's people. Māncāla is richly dressed and also comes to the pillar in a great procession. The platform covers the earth, and the canopy covers the sky. Banyan leaves are used for wrapping *tāmbūlam*.

For nine days the marriage is celebrated. After it is over, Aitamma takes her son and daughter-in-law to her house for five days. After that, Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu takes the children to his house for five days.

From that time on, Bāluḍu stays with his parents, and Māncāla stays with her parents. From that time on, the children go on with their children's games, but they never see each other again.

Notes

1 The two who are omitted in this list are Brahma Nāyuḍu's wife, Aitamma, and Teppali Nīḍu's wife, who is never mentioned by name. The latter is an anachronism here, since she presumably died on her husband's funeral pyre after the Battle of Āraṇagaṇḍla.

2 *elephant lime*: *gajanimma*. Brown calls it the 'large hill orange'.

3 Hindu temples ordinarily face east. Thus, the God simply turns his face away.

4 *shears she has in her hands*. Presumably the shears she was about to use to decapitate herself if the boon was not granted.

5 The list of castes differs in different sources. Elsewhere in Galeyya's version he includes a Mangala (barber) and another Velama (the caste Brahma Nāyuḍu and his brothers, and their wives belong to). The artisan

castes always dominate the list with the Velama and Brāhmaṇ being the only exceptions.

6 *Manmatha*: The Hindu God of love. He is always said to be very beautiful.

7 One manuscript of the Telugu *Bhāgavatamu* states that Kriṣṇa was born on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of Śrāvaṇa. Other manuscripts are silent about the date of his birth. Bammera Pōtanā, *Śrī Mahābhāgvatamu* (Hyderabad: Āndhra Pradesh Sahitya Academi, 1964), p. 14.

8 *The ground . . . fiercely at the Seventy-two Clansmen*: Contemporary Telugu custom allows a baby to indicate what path of life it will follow in a similar manner. The choice is given to a baby on the day it first eats solid food.

9 Tundapalli-Rāyavaram, Durgi, Oppicerla, Cintapalli, Jūlakallu, and Gutti-Koṇḍa-Jānapādu are all villages in Palnāḍu. Nemalipalli is in Satenapalli Tāluk, and Nakarikallu is in Narasarāvupet Tāluk, both in Guntūr District. The path taken is the same as the main road east from Mācerla, the shortest route to the Bay of Bengal.

10 *Candavōlu*: During the epic time period, this city was the capital of the Velanāṭi Cōlas, feudatories of the Cālukya-Cōḷas and the most powerful kingdom in the whole area. Candavōlu is now a village in Bāpaṭla Tāluk of Guṇṭūr District.

14 *As Kriṣṇa . . . through her breasts*: A reference to the time Kriṣṇa sucked 8–10 miles, the distance given is too short. The number 'seven', however, is one of the most popular auspicious numbers in the epic and in other Telugu oral literature.

12 He is called Śīlamma Pērayya after his mother whose name is Śīlamma.

13 This is apparently a folk method of restoring a mother's flow of milk. I have no further information about it.

14 *As Kriṣṇa . . . through her breasts*: A reference to the time Kriṣṇa sucked the life out of a demoness who tried to kill him by giving him suck on her poison breast.

15 Cf. note 5.

16 Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu is Baluḍu's mother's elder brother and the match is an ideal one among the Telugu people.

17 *contenders*: these are perhaps the same as the Sixty-six Heroes, but no definite connection is made.

18 They are not literally his elder brothers. Only the adopted Kannama is Bāluḍu's elder brother.

19 This is the only time in Gāleyya's version that the Rāju's actually exert any authority over Brahma Nāyuḍu. It seems that the plot, in which Bāluḍu must be brought to life to play his role, dictates the need for the Rājus to exert their authority here.

20 The greed of Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu is uncalled for, since only these two children stand to inherit the wealth regardless of which side of the family it comes from. The 'bride price' system of marriage is older that the more recently popular dowry system. One reason for this form of marriage is financial—to keep it in the family, but that does not always prevent the kind of bickering described here. A *tūma* is the largest measure regularly used in measuring out food grains. It varies from place to place.

21 *Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa*: The names of these two God-Heroes are probably invoked here because they would be honest and impartial and because it is too great a job for a human to perform.

Story 11

The Death of Lankanna**

The Palnāḍu herd. Nāyakurālu sends Bōya raiders. The female bat's dream. Her conversation with her husband. The attack. The death of Lankanna. The departure for Mēḍapi.

The Bōya[1] who guarded Brahma Nāyaḍu's cattle was a man named Lankanna. An Erra Golla[2] soldier, he was called Lankayya. In the herd were Sabbi, Tippalisāla, Mēkala Pali Nīḍu, Niluvugala Nimanna, and Guṇḍa Bōyuṇḍu. Lankanna, the chief, stayed with the herds.

Now, concerning the cows and bulls in the Palnāḍu herd, the bulls that went to war were called by the following names: Andēla Basavayya, Harināthuṇḍu, Nandula Piḍiganṭa, Nāgavāsayya, Gōvulavitakāḍa, Gōgubōyanna, Vantapidigangu, Varikinamālu, Kaṭṭanikalikōta, Kalinandiranke, Ātalankadāte, Ambuḍasēna, Bīrudumanta, Bhīmagajama, Gōvarḍacara, Gōpālarēva, Karinandi Basavayya, Kāncī Valabhayya, Nala Bālacandruḍu, Nīlavarnuṇḍu, Jellinadharma, Jāyaganṭanātha, Vaikuṇṭhavāru, Vāsudēvayya, Puṭṭalabhūpati, Pūnyeddu Eddu, Indrunivajram, Ippadi Tśa, Gōvubhairavamūrti, Gōvinda Rāju, Cenculagōvayya, Cennamalyan, Kānci Ekambara, Kāḷikanātha, Matulāpuripi, Mahānandinātha, Kāmudasōmara, Kayya Yamuḍu, Rāmuḍu, Bhīmuḍu, and Rankēlusalupu.[3] These were the bulls, full of spirit and mettle, that came when they called.

The also called the cows by name. Carefully they tended the bulls, cows, young bulls, calves, and suckling calves as they came in order. When they saw the animals, they were full of pleasure. In the herd were bulls, cows, young bulls, calves, and suckling calves, all.

They were named like this: Neṭṭaiyana Eddu, the bull with one horn back and one horn forward; Gaḍupu Eddu, the bull with the bent tail; Pure Black Bull; Bull with the Great Hump; Spotted Face; and Yellow Bull. When the bulls moved, full of spirit, bells tinkled and rang. These were the names of the cows, bulls, and calves in the Palnāḍu herd.

Besides these, there was in the herd a young, black pack bull that carried the images of Goddess Ankālaparamēśvari and Cennakēśvar-

**Part translated and part detailed summary.

asvāmi. There was also a consecrated cow called 'Round Horns' that provided milk for Ankālamma, Lakṣmi Dēvi, and Cennakēśvara. This mother was also in the herd.

There were Bōyas to guard these cattle, and their leader was Lankayya.

In the midst of the herd grew a *maddi*[4] tree. The tree grew where the herd was bedded down. It was a *maddi* tree. In the *maddi* tree lived a pair of fruit-bats,[5] male and female. They came long ago when the tree sprang up or when the herd came. They came as husband and wife, built their nest, laid eggs,[6] and began raising young. When the fruit-bats drank milk, curd, butter, clarified butter, and buttermilk no one shooed them away. No one scolded them or complained. No one waved them away or complained, so the bats remained there.

Meanwhile, every morning and every evening, Lankayya sent fifty yokes of milk and curds to Mācerla.

This is what Nāyakurālu did.

'O Father, Brahma Nāyuḍu of Palnāḍu is in Maṇḍādi. Go to Mācerla and from there to Erragoṇḍa, Venkatāḍri and Gollapalli[7] in the South. In Gollapalli are the Kōya[8] Bōyas. They are men with swords in their belts; they carry the pig lance; they wield the dagger. Tell those Bōyas to come to me,' said Nāyakurālu.

The Bōya Nāyaks[9] came directly to Nāyakurālu, bowed down, and said, 'O Woman! Nāgamma, we do not know why you have called us. Tell us, Nāyakurālu. Tell us, Nāyakurālu of Jiṭṭa Gāmālapāḍu; beautiful daughter of Caudari Rāmā Reḍḍi; niece of Mēkapōtula Jaggā Reḍḍi; Nāgamma, you who dwell freely in Gāmālapāḍu.'

Then the Bōyas took leave of Nāyakurālu and went to Maṇḍādi.[10] The leaders of the Bōyas surveyed all the streets of the city. Maṇḍādi was built by Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate. It was made of gold and called Golden Maṇḍādi. It could not be outshone by Brahma. The Gods could not look at it. Even more, it was built by Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, and made of gold. Every house added charm to its street. The walls were whitewashed and the assembly halls were of gold. Everywhere were the conch and discus. Fine emeralds shone in great abundance.

When the Bōyas saw the city, their hearts broke and they fell to the earth. Their waists bent, and they fell to the ground. They were deeply grieved and said, 'Oh, no! Never! We are not capable of taking this city called Maṇḍādi.'

The Bōyas went to the herd. By the time they got to the herd, they had spent three days on the trail without pausing or stopping at any other city.

At that time, Brahma Nāyuḍu's mother, Śīlamma, said, 'O Father! [Lankanna!]'[11]

'What is it, Woman?'

'Every day, 365 days a year, you send milk and curds to my house. I am very pleased with that. We eat full meals. But I hear that you make rice pudding[12] in your herd. That is said to be very fine and tasty, and made with an abundance of milk. You must send me some of that rice pudding, made by your own hands,' said the mother.

After Śīlamma had made her request, but before Lankanna had sent the pudding, he was sleeping one night with the herd. As he slept, the male and female fruit-bats were perched in the tree. The female had a dream.[13] She dreamed that Nāyakurālu launched a raid on the herd. The raiders attacked, killing both cattle and Bōyas. They fought with chief Lankanna, too. Six hundred thousand Bōyas and Lankanna, known as Rāju of Rājus, were slain. This was her dream.

The female bat said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer, we were born on this tree, and here we have lived. We were born on this *maddi* tree and all our lives we have been here. We are associated with this tree by previous births. Nāyakurālu is about to plunder the herd. The Bōyas will attack, and there will be a terrible battle. Six hundred Bōyas, the cattle herd, and Lankanna, Rāju of Rājus, will be slain. It is destined to happen. We must leave here and go to live on some mountain or the other. They say that one can live on *balusu* leaves and get by.[14] Lord, we must not remain here. We must go to some forest or mountain. We cannot stay here. They will attack Lankanna and the herd. They will burn this *maddi* tree. We also will die,' she said.

'O Wedded Wife, listen to what I say! Wedded Wife, listen to what I say! If you desire life, take your sons and daughters and go. Find a mountain or forest and live there. I shall not come with you. This *maddi* tree grew here in the herd. Since we came here, we have had many sons and daughters. We have drunk milk and cream. They have never shooed us away. We have eaten their food and now they are in trouble: these cows, Bōyas, soldiers, Sabbi, Tippalisāla, Mēkala Pali Nīḍu, Niluvugala Nimanna, Guṇḍa Bōyuṇḍu, and the great soul, Lankanna. When they die and the cattle are slain, I shall take no pleasure in living. As for me, I shall not come. Go ahead! Take your babies and go,' said the male bat.

Now Lankanna knew the language of the bats.[15] He heard what they said.

'Listen to me, Lord of Breath,' cried the female, shedding many

tears. Her right eye wept a torrent of tears. Her waist bent and she fell to the ground.

Regaining consciousness, she rose up and said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life, we have given birth to little ones with open mouths. The children will die also, Lord! Listen to what I am telling you, Lord of Breath!'

'Wedded Wife, I will never follow you on that account. Don't think it for a minute. Go if you want to keep on living. I shall stay here. I shall die with Lankanna, the cows, bulls, and calves. When Lankanna and all the Bōyas die, our lives will be over,' said the male.

When Lankanna heard this exchange, he knew that the raiders were on their way. Taking it to heart, he took up his weapons: broadsword, dagger, arrows, lance, club, mace, dart, axe, and battleaxe.

The attacking Bōyas were many, a great host. Lankanna's defenders were only a few. They were simply watching the herd.

That night, in the dead of night, when all was deep darkness, the raiders came. The attacked the herds and the Bōyas.[16]

The Death of Lankanna*

A terrible battle ensues, and Lankanna is sorely wounded. In the middle of the herd is a compound. Opening the gate, he goes inside and prays to Cennakēśvarasvāmi, Ankālaparamēśvari, and Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Lankanna tells Śīlamma that he is now supplying the rice pudding that she requested. The preparation of the pudding is equated with the battle that Lankanna has fought and the dispatching of the pudding to the sacrifice of his own life.

Praying to Śiva, he opens the gate and stands there blocking the gate. He calls on Cennakēśvarasvāmi, the pack bullock, and the cow, telling them that the Bolli Āvu[17] is in his house. Then the Gangāpati Āvu[18] bellows, rises up and places her hooves on his head and throat. No sooner does Bolli Āvu place her hooves on Lankanna's neck than it is severed and his head falls away.[19]

The herd stampedes and all the cattle pass over Lankayya. The *maddi* tree is struck and burned by Nāyakurālu's Bōyas, and the fruit-bat family dies in the blaze.

Returning from the raid, the raiders pass by Maṇḍādi on their way to Gangāvaram and Gurajāla. Brahma Nāyuḍu sees them passing, and his mother tells him what has happened. The cattle are without food or water and suffering greatly.

Brahma Nāyuḍu calls Kannama and Sunkari and tells them what has

*Detailed summary

happened. They prepare for battle and the three set out in pursuit. Taking a short cut, the three pursuers each station themselves in a different pass. When the Bōyas come, they are stopped at the passes and scattered.

Brahma Nāyuḍu rounds up the stray cattle. Next, he goes to the herd and finds the body of Lankanna. He feeds the cows and bulls and then prepares to restore Lankanna to life. Gathering up the parts of Lankanna's body, Brahma Nāyuḍu puts each limb and organ in its proper place. He whispers a spell in Lankanna's ear and soon brings him back to life.[20]

But Lankanna does not choose to live again. He says that he has fought enough battles and wants only to be sent to Vaikuṇṭha. Removing the *tulasi* necklace from Lankanna's neck, Brahma Nāyuḍu sends him to Vaikuṇṭha. A tomb is constructed, and Lankanna is laid to rest.

Realizing that the place is not safe from attack, Brahma Nāyuḍu decides to move. Taking all the people with him, he crosses the Kriṣṇā River and leaves Cennakēśvara's palanquin, the golden drums of Palnāḍu, Brahma Nāyuḍu's dagger, and some money with the God at Parvatam. From there, he goes to Mēḍapi where he makes his headquarters.

Notes

1 *Bōya*: An important caste in the Rāyalasīma area of A. P. and in parts of Karnātaka. They are now engaged in a variety of occupations ranging from agriculture to hunting. During the eighteenth century they were important fighting men in the various warring armies. Many of the Poligars (small chieftains) were also Bōyas. Cf. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, vol. 1, pp. 180–209. Little is available concerning the Bōyas during the epic period, but they were an important fighting people in the southern Telugu country when the Eastern Cāḷukyas annexed that area in the last half of the ninth century A D. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya, 'The Eastern Chāḷukyas', in G. Yazdani, ed., *The Early History of the Deccan* (London, 1960), pp. 476–7.

2 *Erra Golla*: A division of the Golla caste. Erra Gollas are *pūjāris* in the Temple of the Heroes at Kārempūḍi and in other local shrines. The Erra Gollas do not seem to be the same as Bōyas, the former being primarily herdsmen, while the latter are fighting men. The identity of Lankanna is confusing. He is also said to be the offspring of Śivanāgāla Dēvi and Śivasingāla Rāju, p. 213.

3 *Andēla Basavayya . . . Rankēlusalupu*: These names are adopted from a wide range of sources, Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva literature, *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *The Epic of Palnāḍu* itself, etc.

4 *maddi*: *pentaptera arjuna* or *terminalia glabra*.

5 *fruit-bats*: *kabōdi* (blind) *pakṣulu* (birds), a large species of bat that hangs

upside down in tall trees during the daytime. They are considered to be among the most innocent and helpless of creatures and are sometimes even sprayed with water in hot weather when they appear to be helpless to get water for themselves. They are also called 'flying foxes'.

6 *laid eggs*: The word '*pakṣi*' is used for both 'bird' and 'bat', and Gāleyya seems to have confused the method of propagation as well.

7 Villages in Mārkāpur Tāluk, Ongōlu District.

8 *Kōya*: A mountain tribe in the Telugu country. The word seems to be used here to rhyme with Bōya, though the two may also be associated in some other way.

9 *Nāyak*: A title used by the Bōyas for their chiefs. The title is, of course, used by many other castes as well.

10 *Maṇḍādi*: This Maṇḍādi is not the one near Mācerla, but is said to have been somewhere in the Dēvarakoṇḍa Tāluk of Nalgoṇḍa District. It was perhaps only a temporary camp where the *manda* (herd) was kept. There is no village by this name in the area now.

11 Gāleyya mistakenly says 'Bāla Gopanna', the Hero of 'The Cock Fight'.

12 *rice pudding*: *paramānnamu*, milk boiled with rice and sugar.

13 *The female had a dream*: Note that in all cases it is the female who sees the future in a dream.

14 *One can live on balusu leaves and get by*: A common expression for 'getting by somehow or the other'. The *balusu* is a plant eaten only in times of famine.

15 Gollas are supposed to be particulary knowledgeable about what can be learned from birds.

16 The remainder of this story (here summarized) consists largely of formulaic descriptions of battles, prayers, etc., all of which appear elsewhere.

17 *Bolli Āvu*: White Cow. Very little is said about this cow, here, but the worship of a Bollāvu (another way of writing Bolli Āvu) is described in another Telugu epic. There the cow is depicted as an incarnation of Kriṣṇa or Viṣṇu. In that epic the Bollāvu fights on the side of the Yādavas, lending them great support. V. Prabhakarasastri, ed., *Kāṭamarāju Katha*, pp. 46–7.

18 *Gangāpati Āvu*: Śiva's cow, another name for Bolli Āvu.

19 This seems to be an instance of self-sacrifice on th epart of Lakanna.

20 The re-enactment of this resuscitation is an important even in the Festival of the Heroes calendar. For this reason, this story is one that must be sung every year in Kārempūḍi.

Story 12

The Mission to Gurajāla

Brahma Nāyuḍu in exile. Nāyakurālu's Bōyas attack the herd. Brahma Nāyuḍu raids Gurajāla. The move to Mēḍapi. The period of exile expires. Ala Rācamallu is named ambassador to Gurajāla. Komma Rāju refuses to send his son. Brahma Nāyuḍu offers his *tulasi* necklace. He asks Callamā Dēvi's permission to send her son. Callamā Dēvi accuses him of harbouring malice. The story of Ala Rācamallu's quarrel with Peddanna and Brahma Nāyuḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu promises to give her a son if Ala Rācamallu dies. Callamā Dēvi agrees to send her son. Brahma Nāyuḍu tells him to go but does not give him permission to return. Bāluḍu returns the necklace to his father. Cennakēśvara rejects Ala Rācamallu's petition. Ala Rācamallu waits in Cerlaguḍipāḍu, hoping to see his wife. Peramā Dēvi sends food to her husband. Nāyakurālu intercepts the food and poisons it. Kannama discovers the trick. Ala Rācamallu is poisoned by poison flowers. Peramā Dēvi curses her father and uncles. Brahma Nāyuḍu offers to restore Ala Rācamallu to life. Ala Rācamallu rejects the offer.

Brahma Nāyuḍu and Nāyakurālu staged a cock fight, and Brahma Nāyuḍu lost. So he left Mācerla, his land; he left the treasures of the city; he left the ripe crops in the fields. He dug new tanks and drank water from them; his cattle grazed in the forest; his people cut leaves from the forest trees and fed them to the cattle. He left behind all the famed lands of Mācerla, but the people of Mācerla's twenty-nine[1] villages followed him. He crossed at Shining Ford, entering the great Dēvarakoṇḍa country.

Brahma Nāyuḍu was defeated by Nāyakurālu at the cock fight. He and all his troops rose up and departed for the Dēvarakoṇḍa country. When they arrived there, Sūrayya built Sūrāvupēṭa; Pērayya built Pērvēdula; and Kannama built Kanakādripēṭa.[2] Brahma Nāyuḍu built Golden Maṇḍādi and ruled from there.

One day, while Brahma Nāyuḍu was ruling Maṇḍādi, Nāyakurālu thought to herself like this: 'Brahma Nāyuḍu lost his land to me at the cock fight. Now he has built Maṇḍādi in the Dēvarakoṇḍa country. I must have Maṇḍādi destroyed.'

To the south lay Erragoṇḍa, Venkatāḍri, and Gollapalli. In Gollapalli lived the Kōya Bōyas: men with swords in their belts; they carry the pig lance; they wield the dagger; it was these Bōyas that Nāyakurālu summoned.

The chief of the Bōyas came and did obeisance to Nāyakurālu. 'O Woman! Nāyakurālu, tell us why you have summoned us. Tell us,' he said.

Nāyakurālu said, 'O chief of the Bōyas, Brahma Nāyuḍu of Palnāḍu lost his land to me at the cock fight. Now he has gone to the Dēvarakoṇḍa country and built the city of Maṇḍādi. Go to Maṇḍādi and lay waste its dwellings. If that is impossible, then destroy the herds.'

The Bōyas went to Maṇḍādi and sent spies into all the streets of the city. It was built by Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate. Every house added charm to its street. The walls were whitewashed milk white; the audience halls were of emerald. Wherever one looked, fine emeralds shone in great abundance. The Bōyas looked on the city and were filled with amazement. 'We can't take this city,' they said.

The Bōyas turned back and went to the cattle herds of Palnāḍu. When they got there, they found the herds guarded by Lankanna, Rāju of Rājus. He was chief among those who watched the herds. The Bōyas looked with astonishment on the herd. Then they attacked. When Nāyakurālu's Bōyas attacked Lankanna and his Bōyas, a terrible battle ensued. They fought like bulls mauling, like mad elephants churning the earth, like hills clashing together. They fought like Rāma and Rāvaṇa battling, like Vāli and Sugrīva duelling, like a tiger scattering cattle in the forest. This was the battle that Lankanna fought with the Bōyas.

Nāyakurālu's Bōyas slew the herds and Rāju of Rājus, Lankanna. When the slaughter was finished, they drove off the remaining cattle. A *maddi* tree had grown up in the herd; they struck it and set it afire. Observing this with amazement was Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate. He is beyond description; he is the seer of the human world.

'What a deed this is that Nāyakurālu has done,' he said. And he vowed, 'For the death of my Bōyas, I will slay Nalagāma Rāju's elephant warriors. For the plunder of my cattle, I will slay Nalagāma Rāju's horseman. Because Lankanna is dead, I will use my dagger to cut the throats of a pair of Rājus. Because they set fire to my *maddi* tree, I shall set fire to emerald-hued Gurajāla.'

Having made these vows, Brahma Nāyuḍu returned to his house and said, 'Mother! Śīlamma!'

'What is it, Brahma Nāyuḍu?'

'I am going to Gurajāla. Be pleased to give me your leave,' he said.

'Brahma Nāyuḍu! My Son, Nāyakurālu has caused you much distress. I will grant you leave. For the death of our bulls you may slay Nalagāma Rāju's elephants. That will make me happy. For the death of our cows you may slay Nalagāma Rāju's horses. I will be very happy when you do it. Because of the death of my younger brother, Lankanna, you may cut the throats of a pair of Rājus. I will be even happier about that. Because they burned the *maddi* tree in our herd, you have vowed to set fire to emerald-hued Gurajāla. Brahma Nāyuḍu! My Son, in the city of Gurajāla are Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras, all. There are babies, too. Son, the killing of children, women, Brāhmaṇs, and cattle is a great sin. Father! My Son, go to Gurajāla and call out the army. Tell the inhabitants of Gurajāla to evacuate the city. Then set it afire.' This is what she told her son.

Brahma Nāyuḍu took leave of his mother and went to Gurajāla. There he summoned the armies and ordered the people to leave the city, as his mother had advised. For the death of his bulls, Brahma Nāyuḍu slew Nalagāma Rāju's elephants. For the death of his cows, he slew Nalagāma Rāju's horses. For the death of his younger brother, Lankanna, Brahma Nāyuḍu drew his dagger; he preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened; they glowed like the eyes of a spirit. With his weapon, Brahma Nāyuḍu slashed the throats of the pair of Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rājus.[3] For having burned the tree in his herd, Brahma Nāyuḍu told the people to leave their city and he set fire to Gurajāla.

Brahma Nāyuḍu returned to his house in Maṇḍādi. When he arrived there, he went before his mother and said, 'Śīlamma! Mother, it is not good to live in a house where there is a quarrel nor to remain in a city that is subject to attack.[4] We shall go. We cannot remain here.'

Brahma Nāyuḍu took his soldiers and all the others, and crossed the Kriṣṇā River at Shining Ford, leaving the Dēvarakoṇḍa country behind. They all rose up from Maṇḍādi, crossed at the Maddi Maḍugu[5] ford, and arrived at Parvatam. To Lord Mallikārjuna Brahma Nāyuḍu entrusted the following: the sacred golden drums of Palnāḍu,[6] Cennakēśvara's palanquin with the golden trappings, Brahma Nāyuḍu's emerald dagger, and 180,000 *varahās*. He then distributed the sixteen surrounding villages, telling Kannama who was to have which village. The names of the villages are these: Aḍivijamminipalli, Bhīmavaram, Atakōḍi, Cēpalamaḍugu, Isukatripurāntakam, Annasamudram, Mēḍapi, Koccerlakōṭa, Mārkāpur, and Cennapalli. These were the villages that Brahma Nāyuḍu distributed. For himself, he built Mēḍapi and ruled from there.[7]

In Brahma Nāyuḍu's court were the Seventy-two Clansmen, the Sixty-six Heroes, and the Seventy-seven Warriors. One day while the elders sat in court, they addressed Brahma Nāyuḍu: 'O Brahma Nāyuḍu! Father!'

'What is it?'

'We lost our land to Nāyakurālu at the cock fight, and we resided in Maṇḍādi for more than three years. We have now spent over four years here in Mēḍapi. That makes a total of eight years.[8] We lost the cock fight and were to leave for seven years. We have overstayed that time by six months. There is nothing further to be gained from remaining here. We must attempt to regain our land; we must see whether we can or not. Let us call the Brāhmaṇs and have them consult the almanac.'

'Father! Son! Kannama' Come, Kannama, Vikramarka in battle,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

When Brahma Nāyuḍu called, Kannama heard the sound in his right ear. He rose up at once, shining with valour. He grasped his weapon firmly in his hand. This was his garb: trussed-up truss, the truss of Hanuman; a lower cloth with knot tied on knot; folds, garlands, badges, and . . .; . . .; a turban like the moon wound round his head; . . .; . . .; rings in his ears; large sapphire; fine chest ornaments; a black truss tied up in fine style. As he rose up, he wielded a six-cubit sword in his left hand and a twelve-cubit broadsword in his right hand. He yelled, 'A-a-a-hoi', as he bounded on to the platform. When he had leaped into the midst of the assembly, he said, 'Heroes! Fathers! Sixty-six Heroes! Seventy-seven Warriors! Brahma Nāyuḍu, why have you called me? Tell me what it is.'

'Kannama! Son, go to the Brāhmaṇ house and bring the worthy Brāhmaṇs to the court,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Kannama set out. He passed the neighbouring house; he passed the eating hall; he passed the elephant stables; he passed the merchants' shops; he passed the Balije quarters; he passed . . .; he passed . . .; he arrived at the house where the Brāhmaṇs lived. When he got there, he called out like this: 'Kāśīrājabayya, record keeper Peddiboṭlu, . . ., Durgayyaboṭlu, Enaballamācayya, Ekāmbarayya, Pappumādavalammi, Goppalasiriboṭlu, Kuntimādayya.'

The Brāhmaṇs heard the call in their right ears. 'Who are you?' they asked.

'I am the son of Brahma Nāyuḍu. My name is Kannama Dāsu.'[9]

'Why have you come?' said the Brāhmaṇs.

'My father, Brahma Nāyuḍu; the Seventy-two Clansmen; the Sixty-six Heroes; the Seventy-seven Warriors; Sūr Nīḍu; and Malli Nīḍu are

sitting in the court. They ordered me to bring you at once,' said Kannama.

The Brāhmaṇs rose up quickly and set out wearing ochre robes and antelope skins. They carried water pots and ash pots; they held the great almanac in their hands. Straight to the court came the Brāhmaṇs. When they arrived, everyone was sitting in his place. As the Brāhmaṇs arrived, all the men in the court did obeisance to them. Fine mats were spread for the Brāhmaṇs, and they were seated.

When they had all taken their seats, they said, 'What is it, Brahma Nāyuḍu? Why have you called us?'

'O Worthy Brāhmaṇs!'

'What is it, Father?'

'We lost our land in the cock fight with Nāyakurālu. That was seven years ago. We spent three years in Maṇḍādi. We have now been here in Mēḍapi for four years and six months. This is the eighth year. Examine the almanac and tell us whether we will regain our land at this time or whether we will not,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

When he had spoken the Brāhmaṇs looked at the almanac and said, 'Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, if you try now, you will regain your land.'

'Good, that is very good, Father. Now, concerning the ambassador to Gurajāla, who should he be? Should he be a Rāju, a horseman, a soldier, or a minister? Look at the almanac and tell us,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

The Brāhmaṇ examined the almanac and said, 'Father, the ambassadorship to Gurajāla is not a job for a Rāju; it is not a job for a horseman; it is not a job for a soldier; it is not a job for a minister. It is the Gajapati Rāju who came here from Kalyāṇ, Vīra Sōma Rāju: Kani Sōma Rāju, Kappālapa Sōmuḍu Nāgā Sōma Rāju, and Nandi Sōma Rāju.[10] His son is Raṇa Komma Rāju, and Raṇa Komma Rāju's son is Ala Rācamallu.'

When Ala Rācamallu was named as the ambassador, Raṇa Komma Rāju was present in the court. His heart broke; he fell to the earth; his waist bent. 'O Brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, we are a couple, a father and mother, and we have only one son. Only one son was born to us. Now you say that you will send that only son as ambassador. I will not send my son as you say,' he said. . . .

Komma Rāju cried many grievous tears. 'Brahma Nāyuḍu, you and the Seventy-two Clansmen, the Sixty-six Heroes, and the Seventy-seven Warriors have decided to send my son as ambassador. Instead of sending my son, send your elder brother, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. Send Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju as ambassador to Gurajāla.'

'Komma Rāju, it is not appropriate that I send my elder brother,

Peddanna. I will tell you why it is not right. Near Oppicerla, by the purifying fire pit, close to the pillar of the fallen Rāju, . . ., Nāyakurālu has stationed 800,000 valiant horsemen to attack my brother.[11] If I send my elder brother, neither side will yield. They will fight and the mission will not be successful.'

Then Komma Rāju was silent for some time. 'Brother-in-law![12] Brahma Nāyuḍu, if you won't send your elder brother as ambassador to Gurajāla, why don't you send your son, Kannama?'

'O Brother-in-law! Komma Rāju, it will not work to send my son, Kannama. I will tell you why not. Near Cintapalli . . . Nāyakurālu has stationed a detachment of elephants and mahouts . . . to attack my son, Kannama.[13] If they meet, neither side will yield. They will fight and the mission will not be successful.'

Again, Komma Rāju was silent for some time. 'O Brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu!'

'What is it, Father?'

'What about your son, Bāluḍu? Why don't you send your son, Bāluḍu, as ambassador to Gurajāla?'

Then Brahma Nāyuḍu said, 'Brother-in-law! Komma Rāju, I will not send my son, Bāluḍu; it would not work to send him. Nāyakurālu has stationed a detachment of 800,000 swordsmen and others to attack my son, Bāluḍu. If they meet, neither side will yield. They will fight, and the mission will not be successful.' This was the answer that Brahma Nāyuḍu gave.

'Brother-in-law, quell your grief. Quell it! Brother-in-law! Komma Rāju, perhaps you think that I will send your son alone as ambassador. I will never send him alone. I will send my son, Kannama Nīḍu, with your son. Not only that, I will also send with your son the golden *tulasi* necklace, from around my neck. I will place it on your son's neck. Do you know the nature of that *tulasi* necklace? With that necklace neither arrows nor spells nor poison can kill him. Brother-in-law! Komma Rāju, with that necklace he cannot die.'

When Brahma Nāyuḍu had finished speaking, Komma Rāju did not say a word for a long time. Finally he said, 'Brother-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, it is fine with me if you send my son as ambassador to Gurajāla. But your elder sister is in her house. If you get permission from her, you may send my son as ambassador to Gurajāla.'[14]

When Komma Rāju said this, Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed heartily. He was very pleased with Komma Rāju's words. Brahma Nāyuḍu went straight to his own house. He knew that he must not go to his sister's house empty handed. He took seven days of necklaces and seven days

of saris.[15] Brahma Nāyuḍu had his palanquin brought out, and he sat in it while twelve bearers carried him to the house of Gajapati Rāju.[16]

When Brahma Nāyuḍu arrived at the house of Gajapati Rāju, he called out, 'O Woman! Callamā Dēvi!' That was the call that Brahma Nāyuḍu made.

When Callamā Dēvi, wife of Komma Rāju, heard his call, she sent her maidservants to bring Brahma Nāyuḍu into the house. She had the servants prepare a bed of gold and silk. On the silk bed they spread a mattress; on the mattress they spread a jewelled blanket; on the jewelled blanket they spread a swans down quilt. They made Brahma Nāyuḍu sit down. Callamā Dēvi wondered why he had come.

'O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu!'

'What is it?'

'Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, you have never come for a festival; you have never come for a feast; you have never come on a holy day. After waiting so long to come, Elder Brother, why do you now come to my house?'

'Woman! Callamā Dēvi, I will tell you why I have come. We lost our land to Nāyakurālu at the cock fight. For seven years we have been gone from our homeland. Three years we spent in Maṇḍādi; four years we have spent here in Mēḍapi. We have now stayed an additional six months in this place. We must see whether or not we can return to our land. We called the Brāhmaṇs to look at the almanac. The Brāhmaṇs said, "Brahma Nāyuḍu, if we go now we will have our land restored to us." I said, "Father! Worthy Brāhmaṇ, tell us who should be the ambassador to Gurajāla." They looked at the almanac and said that the ambassador to Gurajāla should be no one else but your little son. It was your little son, my nephew, Ala Rācamallu who was named as the ambassador to Gurajāla,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

No sooner did Callamā Dēvi hear the words of Brahma Nāyuḍu than her heart broke. She said, 'O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, it is not right to send a Rāju to Gurajāla.[17] The people of Gurajāla are at enmity with the people of Mācerla, and the people of Mācerla are at enmity with the people of Gurajāla. It is because of the minister there. The minister, Nāyakurālu, is a poisoner. In the past several Rājus met their death in Gurajāla. O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, this couple, mother and father, has only one son, one protector of the earth. How can you cast your eyes on my one and only son?'[18]

Callamā Dēvi's waist bent and she fell to the earth. She wept for her son.

'O Woman! Callamā Dēvi, I will not send your son as ambassador to Gurajāla. Stop grieving, Woman! Stop grieving! I am not going to send

your son to Gurajāla by himself. I am going to send my son, Kannama Nīḍu,[19] to accompany him. Not only that, I am going to place my golden *tulasi* necklace around your son's neck. With that he cannot be killed by arrows, spells, or poisons. As long as he wears the *tulasi* necklace, he has nothing whatsoever to fear. In addition, if for some unforeseen reason your son should fall in Gurajāla, you must consider the one who died to be Bāluḍu and the one who lives to be Ala Rācamallu.' These were the assurances that Brahma Nāyuḍu gave; he offered his own son.

'Woman, I knew that I must not come to my elder sister's house empty handed. I brought seven days' necklaces and seven days' saris. Here, put on the necklaces. Woman, put on the saris.'

Then Callamā Dēvi said, 'O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu!'

'What is it?'

'We are at enmity with my parents' people.[20] I must not wear the saris of my parents' people; I must not wear their necklaces; I must not look at their lamps, Elder Brother.'

When Callamā Dēvi said this, Brahma Nāyuḍu said, 'O Woman! Callamā Dēvi, that is well and good. What you say is true. You must not wear those saris and necklaces after twelve years. But until twelve years elapse, you may wear the saris and necklaces given by your parents' people.[21] You may look on their lamps. Don't put them all on right now. Just put on this one necklace.'

As he spoke, Brahma Nāyuḍu rose to his feet. He took the precious necklace, set with many emeralds, in his own two hands and started to place it on Callamā Dēvi's neck. As he was placing it on her neck, the necklace gleamed and glittered. When Callamā Dēvi saw the necklace, she forgot about her son's life. The mother desired the necklace.

'Elder Brother, is it right that you should stand and put the necklace around my neck? Stay seated. I will put it on myself,' said Callamā Dēvi.

'Maidservants, prepare water for my bath,' she said.

The maidservants prepared water in this way. In silver vessels they prepared hot water; in gold vessels they brought cold water; they mixed the hot water with the cold; they poured out the warm water for her bath. They brought a three-legged stool and seated Callamā Dēvi upon it. The maidservants quickly brought champaka oil and applied it to her hair. They dressed her in a sari with a flowered blouse. They adorned her with bracelets, anklets, ear-rings, nose rings, and rings for her ten fingers. These and other ornaments they put on; ornaments with pearls, gems, diamonds, and gold. They bedecked her with all manner of precious jewels and fine clothing. . . .[22]

When Callamā Dēvi returned, she said, 'Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu!'

'What is it, Woman?'

'I am very happy now. But my son, Ala Rācamallu, is not at home.'

'Where has he gone?' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'He has taken his troops: Cikkuls, Cinguls, Arabs, Rohilas, Mughals, Paṭāns, and others. He has gone to Tripurāntakam[23] on a complaint. When he finishes his business and returns to my house, I will send him to you. Elder Brother, you may then dispatch my son as ambassador to Gurajāla,' said Callamā Dēvi.

When Callamā Dēvi said this, Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed heartily and said, 'You have said what I wanted to hear.' He was very pleased at the thought of sending Ala Rācamallu to his death.

Then Callamā Dēvi said, 'O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu, it is time for you to eat your dinner. You must not eat food that I have prepared. Eat the food your mother, Śīlamma, prepares. If not that, then eat what has been cooked by the barber's daughter, Pōtasāni, whom you have raised. Eat what your servant has prepared. Go to your house. I will send my son to you. You may dispatch him as ambassador to Gurajāla.'

Then Brahma Nāyuḍu took leave of his sister, Callamā Dēvi. 'I am going,' he said and walked off three paces. Saying that he was going to his house, he took three steps in that direction.

Then Callamā Dēvi said, 'O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu!'

'What is it, O Woman?'

'I am sending my son, Ala Rācamallu, to you, but you harbour malice in your heart.'

Brahma Nāyuḍu turned round and said, 'O Woman! Callamā Dēvi!'

'What is it?'

'Tell me what grudge it is that I nurture from the past. Tell me what it is, Callamā Dēvi.'

'O Elder Brother, I will tell you. Listen carefully to what I say.'

'Tell me. I am listening.'

'Elder Brother, I have an elder brother, your elder brother, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju has a steed. He acquired it through the deceit of the Rājus of Kancerla. The name of the horse is Kārubolanna. The horse's groom, the one who saddles it, is named Dādivādu Mallu. Dādivādu Mallu. . .

'One day the great Dasarā[24] festival arrived. Dādivādu Mallu approached Peddanna and said, "Father! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju! Mighty King Lion of the Rēccrlas! Minister of the Rēvaṇas! Great

Peddanna! Mighty Rāju . . .[25] Raised by Vidyaladēvi, eldest son of Śilamma! The great and mighty Rāju, Peddanna!"

'That is the sort of man my elder brother, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, is.

' "Great Soul! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, the great Dasara festival is here. If you will give me your mount, I will saddle it and take it to the Candravanka. There I will water it and bring it back, Great King," said Dādivādu Mallu.

'Then Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju spoke like this: "Do it! O Dādivādu Mallu, do as you have said."

'Then Dādivādu Mallu went to the stables and saddled Peddanna's horse. When he had saddled the horse, he mounted it and rode straight to the Candravanka for water.

'Meanwhile, Ala Rācamallu has a horse that he had brought from the battle at the sea. The horse is named Savarālagōḍugu. Ala Rācamallu's groom is named Gangādhara. He came to the Rāju and said, "Father, Ala Rācamallu! . . .[26] Father! Great King! Ala Rācamallu, the great Dasara festival is here. If you will give me the horse you ride, I will saddle it and take it to the Candravanka. There I will water it and bring it back."

' "Do it! O Gangādhara, do as you have said."

'Then Gangādhara saddled the horse and put on all its trappings: fine armour about the girth, steel . . ., tassels, fine white tassels, . . ., gold bells . . . and gold anklets on all four legs.

'When he had done so, Gangādhara, the groom, mounted the horse. Taking a whip in his hand, he rode to the bank of the Candravanka. When he arrived there, Peddanna's horse, ridden by Dādivādu Mallu, was coming for water. Ala Rācamallu's horse was also coming for water. Ala Rācamallu's horse was ridden by Gangādhara. The two horses met in front of the Cennakēśvarasvāmi temple.

'Now Peddanna's horse is a stallion, and my son Ala Rācamallu's horse is a mare. When Peddanna's stallion saw my son's mare, he pawed the earth and whinnied. Ala Rācamallu's groom said, "Hey there, Dādivādu Mallu! My Rāju's horse is coming. Rein in your steed!"

'Then Dādivādu Mallu said, "Hey there Gangādhara! Among Rājus he is a Rāju; among horsemen he is a Horseman;[27] he has amassed many titles of honour. The horse of my lord, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, is approaching. Turn your Rāju's steed aside."

'The two grooms began to argue about who should go first. As the argument grew hotter—"Hey there, Gangādhara!"

' "I came first," said Gangādhara.

'Then Ala Rācamallu's groom, Gangādhara, took his whip in his hand and called on his patron God, Śambhumūrti. Taking his whip in

hand, Ala Rācamallu's groom, Gangādhara, called on his patron God, Śambhumūrti, like this: "Gaurīmanōhara, Gangōttamānga, Nāgakankaṇa, Śiva, Nandivāhanuḍu Ghanagajāsurabhanga, Kāmabhasmānga, Lalitaśita, Kandhara, Layakālakarta! Īśvara, Sakalabhūtēśvara, Śarabhāvatāra, Pālakṣa, Bhūtēśa, Paramēśa! Īśvara, Jagadēśvara, Hara, Hara, Sāmbhaśiva!"

'As he called on his God, Gangādhara delivered three blows to Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju's horse and to its groom, Dādivādu Mallu. As the blows landed, Dādivādu Mallu reined his horse round and commanded it to kick three times.

' "What's this, Gangādhara? You say that your Rāju's steed should go first? Here, take these blows," said Dādivādu Mallu. Then taking his whip in hand, he called on his patron God, Cennakēśvarasvāmi, saying, "Cennayya of Mācerla, Kēśava, My Patron God, Cennayya of Ayodhyā, Protector of Our Souls! Rāma! Cennayya of Kāceli, Incarnation of Mercy, Cennayya of Pālamācāpuri, Prayogamāṭa, Cennayya of Mācerla, My Patron God, Lord! Lord Cennakēśvara, where are you?"

'Dādivādu Mallu took his whip in hand and spun his horse's head round. Three blows he delivered to Ala Rācamallu's horse and to its groom, Gangādhara. As Dādivādu Mallu struck, one blow fell on the flank of Ala Rācamallu's horse. The horse wheeled about. When it came round, the return blow stabbed it in the eye. Unable to bear the pain, the horse bolted and fled to the stable.

'After suffering the injury, the horse returned to the stable. From that time on, the horse neither drank water nor ate provender. She refused to eat or drink.

'Now it was Ala Rācamallu's habit to go to the stable once each week to take the horse for a ride. That day Ala Rācamallu rose up as was his habit. Taking his weapon in hand, he started for the stable. When he arrived at the stable, he saw the horse. The horse was crying many grievous tears; it was trembling all over. When Ala Rācamallu saw how the horse was grieving, he said, "What's this, Gangādhara?"

' "Yes? What is it, Sir?"

' "The horse is trembling and weeping. What is the meaning of this?" said Ala Rācamallu.

'Gangādhara himself began to tremble violently. "Great Soul! Ala Rācamallu," he said.

' "What does this mean?"

' "Do you want me to tell you what has happened?"

' "Gangādhara, never mind being afraid. You tell me exactly what has happened."

'"Great Soul, during the Dasarā festival, I came to you and took your horse for water. At the same time the groom, Dādivādu Mallu, also brought your father-in-law Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju's horse for water. The two horses met in front of Cennakēśvara's temple. When Peddanna's horse saw your horse, it pawed the earth and whinnied. I said, 'What's this, Dādivādu Mallu?' He said, 'What's this, Gangādhara? Among Rājus he is a Rāju; among Horsemen he is a Horseman; he has amassed many titles. My lord of death's horse is coming. Turn your horse aside!' We argued. I said that a Rāju is greater. He said a Horseman is greater. He took his staff and jabbed your horse in the eye, Great Soul."

'When Ala Rācamallu heard those words, he flared up, violent with rage. He preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened; he gnashed his teeth; his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit.

'"Before long I am going to fight with my father-in-law, Peddanna Bāḍu Rāju" he said. And he ordered a medallion to be engraved.

'The same day Ala Rācamallu called a goldsmith and had a medallion made. It bore the likeness of Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. When the medallion was finished, he affixed it to the left side of his horse. He affixed it so that the feet stuck up into the air while the head hung downwards.[28] He hung it upsidedown. When this was done, he rode into the court. As he arrived, the neighbouring kings, tributary rulers, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, Sūr Nīḍu, Malli Nīḍu, Brahma Nāyuḍu, and all the rest were sitting in the assembly hall. The Reḍḍi lords were there: Gurava Reḍḍi of Gurajāla; Mallā Reḍḍi of Māḍugula; the lord of Aḍigopala, Annapā Reḍḍi; and Cintapalli Reḍḍi who rules that area. These were the Reḍḍi lords in the court.

'Peddanna saw him coming and said, "Hey there, Herald! Ala Rācamallu is coming. He wears the medallion of some defeated Rāju. He had it made today. Go and see whose likeness it bears. Let me know who it is."

'The herald went over to Ala Rācamallu and took hold of the medallion to see whose likeness it bore. . . . "You have had a medallion made. In whose name have you had it made," he said.

'Then Ala Rācamallu thought to himself, "What's this? He has not come of his own volition. It looks as if my father-in-law, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, has sent him." Then Ala Rācamallu said, "I have tied a medallion to my horse's body, and the medallion bears the likeness of a Rāju, Hey there, Herald Rāghava,[29] I will tell you whose likeness this is. It is the likeness of the one who sent you to ask."

'When he said that, the herald said, "O Father! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju!"

' "What is it?"

' "Your son-in-law, Ala Rācamallu, says that he has affixed the medallion in your name."

'As soon as he heard whose likeness the medallion bore, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju was filled with wrath. He uttered wrathful words; he took up his spear; . . .; he leaped about.

' "O Father-in-law! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, . . . a man is . . . Look, to the east of Mācerla, by the cock-fight ring, near the fighting-cock shed, close by the stone pillar, to the east of Mācerla, at the Kambampāḍu duelling ground I am challenging you to fight."[30]

'Then Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju said, "What's this, Son-in-law, Ala Rācamallu? Where is it that you are challenging me to a fight?"

' "At the duelling ground near Kambhampāḍu, that is the ground where I am challenging you to meet me."

' "O.K., when shall we fight?"

' "Come alone tomorrow morning before the morning star rises I too shall come alone. You and I will fight."

'When he had spoken, Ala Rācamallu wheeled his horse about and left the court.

'That night they waited through the four watches of the night. Before dawn, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju rose up and called for his horse to be saddled. Dādivādu Mallu saddled the horse. Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju approached his steed. He was ready for battle; he grasped his weapon firmly in his hand. He mounted his horse, rose up, and went to the duelling ground near Kambhampāḍu.

'Ala Rācamallu also rose up at dawn and said, "O Gangādhara, saddle my horse."

'Approaching his horse, he prepared himself for battle, and grasped his weapon firmly in his hand. He then mounted his horse, rose up, and spurred his mount. He leaped a *yojana* into the sky and galloped to the duelling grounds at Kambhampāḍu.

'Ala Rācamallu looked at Peddanna and said, "O Father-in-law! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju!"

' "What is it, Son-in-law, Ala Rācamallu?"

' "Father-in-law, when did you arrive?"

' "O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, I just arrived."

' "So it seems that you have come first. Though you came first, you excel in learning; you excel in fencing; you are a mighty Hero on the battlefield. Father-in-law, hurl your weapon against me!" said the Rāju.

' "O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, you yourself must strike the first blow," said Peddanna.

'As they argued back and forth, Peddanna took his weapon in hand. Ala Rācamallu and Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju began slashing away with their weapons, there on the duelling ground near Kambhampāḍu. The two began fighting a terrible, terrible battle.

'Then Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, went to the Candravanka to bathe. When he had finished his bath, he bent over on the grass to affix his sacred marks of Viṣṇu.[31] As he was affixing the marks, the weapon in Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju's hand and the weapon in Ala Rācamallu's hand gleamed and glittered, reflecting in his mirror.[32] Now Brahma Nāyuḍu is Viṣṇu incarnate. He is beyond description; he is the seer of the human world; he is the incarnation of Viṣṇu. When he saw the gleaming and glittering, he said, "What can this be? Son! Kannama!"

' "What is it, Father?"

' "Look there! On the tournament grounds near Kambhampāḍu, weapons are clashing like thunder and lightning without rain or wind. They are giving off great flashes. Is that natural lightning, or is it man-made lightning? Go, Kannama! See what is causing it."

'Then Kannama said, "O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, you are always sending me off on some little task of no consequence before I have finished eating my breakfast."

' "O Son! Kannama, never mind. Stay here. I will go myself."

'When he had finished affixing his sacred mark, he rose up quickly to go. As he did so, Kannama said, "Father, as Ānjanēya[33] served Rāma in days gone by, so am I now serving you."

'Having thus spoken, he set out for the tournament grounds near Kambhampāḍu. He mounted the hillock to see what was happening. Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju and Ala Rācamallu were fighting a terrible, terrible battle. Kannama observed their clashing and said, "O Father! Brahma Nayuḍu!"

' "What is it, Son?"

' "That is not natural lightning but man-made lightning. Father-in-law and son-in-law are fighting on the tournament grounds near Kambhampāḍu. They are fighting a great battle," he said.

'Then Brahma Nāyuḍu thought, "Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-ooo! Ala Rācamallu is a match for my brother, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. He is a great one. Ala Rācamallu is a mighty hero on the battlefield; my elder brother, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, is also such a man. They are evenly matched. Before I can get there, one of them will strike the other one down with his weapon."

'Realizing this, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, cast 2,000 sparks into his mirror. When he directed the sparks into his mirror, the weapon in Peddanna's hand and the weapon in Ala Rācamallu's hand, both weapons, gleamed and glittered. They continued to fight while the weapons flashed.

'Brahma Nāyuḍu finished applying his sacred marks and rose up. As he approached, he thought, "Shall I take Ala Rācamallu's horse in my left hand and Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju's horse in my right hand? No, if I take Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju's horse in my right hand it will be an affront to the Rāju caste. I will have to take Peddanna's horse in my left hand and Ala Rācamallu's horse in my right hand."

'As he was considering what to do, Brahma Nāyuḍu came between the two mounted warriors. He grasped Ala Rācamallu's horse in his right hand. In his left hand he took Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju's horse.

' "O Elder Brother! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju!"

' "What is it, Younger Brother?"

' "What is the meaning of a father-in-law fighting with a son-in-law? Stop it at once."

'Brahma Nāyuḍu drove the horse back. The horse, which had fallen back, charged forward towards Brahma Nāyuḍu. Realizing that it was his younger brother, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju reined in his horse with all his strength. The horse was checked.

' "What's this, Son-in-law? Ala Rācamallu, since when does a son-in-law fight with a father-in-law? Stop it at once!" he said and drove the horse back.

'Ala Rācamallu fell back to the *jammi* tree. Then he charged. Ala Rācamallu made his steed trample on the feet of Viṣṇu incarnate. Brahma Nāyuḍu's big toe was broken.

'Brahma Nāyuḍu saw what Ala Rācamallu had done and thought, "Are-re-re-re-re-Are-reee! My elder brother, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, is a match for him, is he not? If I had not come between them, might this Rāju have been killed. One way or the other, I must pull out the teeth that bite his lower lip when he is angry."[34] In this way Brahma Nāyuḍu harboured rancour in his heart.

' "Elder Brother! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju!" he said.

' "What is it, Elder Brother?"

' "Drop your weapon," he said.

'Peddanna lowered his weapon and sheathed it.

' "O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu!"

' "What is it, Father-in-law?"

' "Drop your weapon," he said. "There is no need for quarrels and fighting. Drop your weapon."

'Ala Rācamallu laughed loud and long. "Father-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu," he said.

' "What is it, Son-in-law? What is it, Ala Rācamallu?"

' "O Father-in-law, I fought at Kānci; I uprooted the banner pole of Kānci. I fought at Uṭṭi; I cut the strings of the pot hanger at Uṭṭi. I fought at the sea; there I took the horse, Savarālagoḍugu as a prize. Today I am fighting with my father-in-law. I will not sheath my weapon until it receives an offering."

'Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed aloud and said, "O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu! So your weapon requires an offering? Come along."

'In the street before the front porch of the Cennakēśvarasvāmi temple in Mācerla was a banyan tree. It was a magnificent banyan tree. They approached the tree. To the tree Brahma Nāyuḍu tied seven large sheep, seven proud elephants, seven bundles of . . ., and seven bull buffalo. When they were all tied up, Brahma Nāyuḍu set up a green branch in his name.

' "Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, give these as an offering to your weapon."

'Father-in-law, you excel in learning; you excel in fencing; you are a matchless warrior in battle," said Ala Rācamallu to his father-in-law, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju. "You give these as an offering to your weapon."

'Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju gripped his weapon firmly in his hand. With a might yell, he hurled it. The weapon slashed through the seven bull buffalo, the seven proud elephants, and the seven bundles of. . . . When it had sliced through all of these, it came to the green bough placed there in the name of Brahma Nāyuḍu. There the weapon stopped.

'Again Brahma Nāyuḍu tied up the seven offerings. "Listen to me, Son-in-law, Ala Rācamallu, give these as an offering to your weapon," he said.

' "If I dismount to hurl my weapon, it will be a disgrace to the Rājus," thought Ala Rācamallu, and he remained mounted on his horse. He gripped his weapon tightly; he gave a mighty yell. At that the earth trembled and shook.

'When Ala Rācamallu hurled his weapon, it slashed through the seven bull buffalo, the seven large sheep, the seven proud elephants, and the seven bundles of. . . . It also tore through the green bough and stuck in the earth.

'Brahma Nāyuḍu saw what had happened and thought, "What is this? Some time or the other—I have kept him for a long time. Some way or the other I must pull out the teeth that bite his lower lip when

he is angry." Thus did Brahma Nāyuḍu harbour rancour in his heart.

'Ala Rācamallu looked at his weapon. "O Father-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, my weapon is stuck in the earth. Pull out my weapon and give it to me," he said.

'"O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, every man's weapon is suited to his own hand. Your weapon is not suited to my hand. Why should I take it up? You take it up, yourself," he said.

'Ala Rācamallu thought, "If I dismount to take up my weapon, it will be a disgrace to the Rājus." He made his horse kneel down to the earth and pulled out his weapon. On the point of the weapon, a clod of earth the size of an elephant's head was ripped up and hurled into the sky. With his thumb,[36] Ala Rācamallu cast it into the sky.

'Then all the Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras in Mācerla thought, "What a mighty man is Ala Rācamallu; what an intelligent man he is; what a man of valour." They raised up their heads and looked, and wondered.

'Brahma Nāyuḍu looked up and wondered if he would be able to remain in that city or not. Ala Rācamallu had torn up, as if it were a piece of betel nut, a clod of earth the size of an elephant's head.

'For these reasons, Brahma Nāyuḍu grieved and smarted. In his grief a blister the size of an *usiri* fruit arose on his body. Brahma Nāyuḍu saw it and was amazed. "Some way or the other I must extract the teeth that bite his lower lip," said Brahma Nāyuḍu in his heart.'

Through this story, Callamā Dēvi reminded Brahma Nāyuḍu of past events. She was concerned for her one and only son.

'O Elder Brother! Brahma Nāyuḍu!' she said.

'What is it, Woman?'

'The hatred from the past is still in your heart, Elder Brother.'

'It is not true. I am not harbouring any rancour from the past. Send your son. Send your son as the ambassador to Gurajāla. Your son has nothing whatsoever to fear. I will send my son, Kannama Nīḍu, to accompany your son. Not only that, I will take the golden *tulasi* necklace from my neck and put it around your son's neck. As long as he has that *tulasi* necklace he cannot be killed by arrows, poison, or spells. There is nothing that can harm him. Furthermore, if for some unforeseen reason your son should fall in Gurajāla, you must consider the dead son to be Bāluḍu and the living son to be Ala Rācamallu,' he said. He offered Bāluḍu in the event of her son's death. He gave her Bāluḍu to dwell in her house.

'Let it be as you have said,' said Callamā Dēvi. 'I will give him leave to go. And I will send him to you.'

When Callamā Dēvi uttered these words, Brahma Nāyuḍu laughed aloud. 'You have granted my wish,' he thought. He was overjoyed at the thought of Ala Rācamallu going to his death.

Then taking leave of Callamā Dēvi, Brahma Nāyuḍu went to his own house.

Ala Rācamallu had taken his soldiers and gone hunting in the forest.[37] He bagged gayal, axis deer, crocodile, wild boar, mountain sheep, peacock, numidian crane, lapwing, black cock, water cock, and other birds and animals. As he was returning to his home, Ala Rācamallu's mother heard the sound of the war drum. She knew that her son was coming. In a silver vessel she prepared hot water; in a gold vessel she brought cold water; she mixed the hot and cold water, pouring it out for his bath.

When he arrived, Ala Rācamallu dismounted, ordered his men to do likewise, and went into the house.

His mother looked at him and said, 'Father! Son! Ala Rācamallu, I have prepared your bath.' She removed his clothing and said, 'Come now, and bathe.' She gave him a three-legged stool and made him sit down. She began to rub his hair with champaka oil.

As she cared for him, she remembered Brahma Nāyuḍu's visit and the matter of the embassy to Gurajāla. She said, 'Father! Father! Ala Rācamallu! O Father! O Son, your father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, came to our house. If he says to go, a man must go. If he says to come, a man must come.' She grieved as she spoke. 'We are a couple, a mother and father, and we have only one son, one protector of the earth. Your father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, came to our house.'

The mother cried many grievous tears; pearl-like tears soaked her face; her waist bent, and she fell to the earth. When she recovered from her swoon, she rose quickly to her feet. The mother wept for many reasons, and her tears fell on her son's head. For all these reasons, she fell on her son Ala Rācamallu's right foot.

Ala Rācamallu looked at his mother, surprised. 'What is this?,' he said. He lifted her head and looked into her face. His mother was weeping terribly.

Ala Rācamallu leaped over the basin. 'Mother, you do not have four sons or even three. I am your one and only son. If you cannot shampoo and oil my hair, what grief you must be feeling, my mother.[38] Why are you grieving, Mother?'

'O Father! Son! Ala Rācamallu, I am not grieving because I cannot shampoo your hair.'

'Then why are you grieving, Mother?'

'Your father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, came to our house, my son.'

'Mother, did you say that my father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, came to our house?'

'Father, he did indeed come.'

'Why did he come?'

'He came and asked me to send you as ambassador to Gurajāla.'

'What did you tell him, Mother?'

'I said that I would talk to you about it. But I said that I would not send you.'

When he heard his mother's words, Ala Rācamallu flared up with anger and said, 'Mother, why are you grieving like that? Why did you marry me to Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi of Gurajāla? She is the daughter of Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju. You are weeping because my father-in-law came and wanted to send me to my mother-in-law's house. You said that you would not send me? You would come between a husband and wife? You are a traitor to your caste. I cannot bear to look on your face, you vile-souled woman. Mother, I will go whether you send me or not.'

He went to his soldiers. At that time, the soldiers were cooking dinner. They had their pots on the fire; the meal was cooked; they were about to eat. They were squatting about.

'Hey Soldiers! I am going as ambassador to Gurajāla. Get ready for the trip,' said Ala Rācamallu.

No sooner had the Rāju given them leave than the soldiers scrambled to their feet. When they rose up, some guilt adhered to the Rāju. He was guilty of some misdeed. Then his mother rose up and stopped him.[39]

'O Son! Father, I said I would send you to Gurajāla. I am giving you my leave. Without a mother's blessings there is no victory. . . .,' she said and gave him camphor *tāmbūlam*. 'May you have the fierceness in revenge of Aśvatthāman. May you have the steadfastness of Vibīṣana. Go safely to Gurajāla. Speak properly as befits an ambassador. Gain your objectives and return safely to Mēḍapi.'

Taking leave of his mother, he went straight to the court. When he got to the court, he went to his father-in-law, Peddanna. 'Father-in-law! Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, for some reason or the other I put on a medallion with your picture. Take the medallion that bears your image and give me your leave to go safely to Gurajāla. Kindly give me your leave to return safely as well,' he said.

'O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, go safely to Gurajāla; speak properly as befits an ambassador; gain your objectives and return safely. I give you my leave.'

He went to the three young Malidēva Rājus and took their leave. He

took leave of the Seventy-two Clansmen. This is what Ala Rācamallu did. Next he took leave of the Seventy-seven Warriors. At last he came to his father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu. Ala Rācamallu did obeisance to his father-in-law. 'O Father-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I am going as ambassador to Gurajāla. Give me your leave for a safe journey,' he said.

Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, said, 'O Son! Kannama, come here,' he said.

'What is it, Father?'

'Your brother-in-law requests you to accompany him on a journey,' he said.

Kannama made ready for the journey.

Again, a second time, Ala Rācamallu said, 'Father-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I am going as ambassador to Gurajāla. Kindly give me your leave.'

Brahma Nāyuḍu took the golden *tulasi* necklace from his neck and put it round the neck of his son-in-law, Ala Rācamallu. That *tulasi* necklace had the power to prevent death from arrows, poison, and spells.

A third time Ala Rācamallu made the same request. As he did so, he thought, 'My father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, is . . . If he tells a man to go, that man can go. If he tells a man to come, that man can come. I can go to Gurajāla, but I can never return.' He wept many grievous tears. 'I can go to Gurajāla, but I cannot return.'

As he grieved, Ala Rācamallu gathered together his army and set forth. He kept thinking to himself, 'My father-in-law gave me permission to go, but he did not give me permission to return. I will be able to go to Gurajāla, but I will not be able to return.'[40] He was deeply grieved and sorely troubled.

Ala Rācamallu, the excellent warrior, passed the excellent pond. Passing the pond, the great warrior went steadfastly on. He passed the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*,[41] and *jammi* trees. Passing the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees, and passing the pond, Ala Rācamallu stuck, grieving as he went, to his difficult path. This was the way he travelled on.

Meanwhile, Brahma Nāyuḍu's son, Bālacandruḍu, came to the court. Brahma Nāyuḍu looked at his son and said, 'Father! Son! Bālacandra!'

'What is it, Father?'

'Your brother-in-law has just left for Gurajāla. Did your brother-in-law say anything to you before he left?'

'O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, my brother-in-law left for my elder sister's house without a word to me in consideration of our friendship.'

'O Son! Bālacandra, I took the golden *tulasi* necklace from my neck and put it round his neck. As long as he has that *tulasi* necklace the Rāju cannot die. O Son, can you bring back my *tulasi* necklace for me?'

'O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, if you will give me your leave, by your grace, I will go and bring it back. I will bring it back this very moment.'

'Go then, my son.'

Bālacandruḍu's steed was a ram born of a mountain sheep and a young lion. He saddled, bridled, and mounted the ram. Its head was the head of a lion; its body was the body of a ram. When he had readied the ram, Bālacandruḍu took the path that Ala Rācamallu had taken. He sat on his steed and spurred it. The steed leaped a *yojana* into the air and galloped along the path. As he galloped along, Bālacandruḍu called, 'Brother-in-law! O Brother-in-law! O Ala Rācamallu!'

As Bālacandra sped along the path, calling as he went, Ala Rācamallu was grieving inwardly. 'My father-in-law told me to leave, but he did not tell me to come back. I can go to Gurajāla, but I can never return.'

In the midst of his grieving, Ala Rācamallu heard the call, 'Brother-in-law!', in his right ear.

'What a mistake I have made. I took leave of the Seventy-two Clansmen; I took leave of the Sixty-six Heroes; I took leave of the Seventy-two Warriors; but I did not take leave of my friend and brother-in-law, Bālacandruḍu. What a terrible mistake I have made,' he thought.

Ala Rācamallu dismounted from his horse and walked down the path on which Bāluḍu was approaching. Bāluḍu also dismounted from his ram. The two walked side-by-side.

'Brother-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, you are going to my elder sister's house. But you left without saying a word to me,' said Bālacandruḍu.

As they talked they came to the Kaṇḍlēru.[42] On the grass on the banks of the Kaṇḍlēru, all the elephants, horses, camels, . . ., irregulars, and soldiers had halted. The entire army had pitched their tents there. For shade they pitched tents of blue silk; for the morning they pitched tents of gold silk; for the noontime they pitched tents of silver silk. When they had pitched all the tents, they remained there.

When the tents were pitched, Bāluḍu said, 'O Brother-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, you are on your way to my elder sister's house. We do not know if you will return in two days, three days, or even longer. Why don't the two of us play a game of dice?'

'Sit down! Sit down!' said Ala Rācamallu. He had blankets and

pillows arranged and the two brothers-in-law, Ala Rācamallu and Bālacandruḍu, sat down to a game of dice.

While they were playing, Bālacandra said, 'Brother-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, you have the horse named Savarālagōḍugu that you brought back when you fought at the sea. My mount is a ram born of a mountain sheep and a young lion. Can you jump your horse to the other side of the Kaṇḍlēru? If you do it, I will give you all the precious jewellery that I wear. If your horse fails in the attempt, I will make my ram jump it. If I succeed you must give me all the precious jewellery that you wear.'

The two rose up for the contest.

'O Brother-in-law! Bālacandra, you jump your steed,' said Ala Rācamallu.

'Brother-in-law, you excel in learning; you excel in fencing; you are a mighty warrior on the battlefield. You jump your horse first,' said Bālacandruḍu.

Ala Rācamallu mounted his horse. The horse leapt a *yojana* into the air. As it was leaping from the near bank to the far, his father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate, one who is present everywhere, intervened. The horse's forelegs landed on the opposite bank, but its hind legs landed in the water.

Bālacandruḍu saw what had happened and said, 'O Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I will bring it! I will bring it. I will bring the *tulasi* necklace.'

Then Bālacandruḍu spurred his ram. The ram leaped high into the air and jumped from the near side to the opposite bank. It landed with all four legs on the grass of the opposite bank. This was the way that the ram leapt.

When the ram landed, Bālacandruḍu said, 'Bring them here! Bring them here, Brother-in-law. Give me all the precious ornaments that you wear.'

'O Brother-in-law! Bālacandra, I will give them to you,' he said.

Fine blankets and pillows were spread and they sat down. Ala Rācamallu gave all his many precious ornaments to Bālacandruḍu. Because Brahma Nāyuḍu, who is present everywhere, intervened, he forgot about the *tulasi* necklace. He removed it along with the rest. Bāluḍu took the *tulasi* necklace and hid it from Ala Rācamallu's sight.

Meanwhile, the army crossed to the opposite bank of the river.

'Brother-in-law, you are on your way to my elder sister's house, and you are going happily. My elder sister will be expecting you to bring clothing and ornaments. She will be thinking to herself how fine and handsome and happy you are. She will want her younger brothers to be impressed. But if you come like this, her younger brothers will think

that you have come in the guise of a scoundrel and a thief. Brother-in-law, put on my raiment. Put on your raiment, too. Take them. You may give them back when you return,' said Bāluḍu, and gave all his clothing and ornaments to Ala Rācamallu.

Ala Rācamallu did not remember the *tulasi* necklace. The reason was this: his father-in-law, who is present everywhere, intervened.

'Brother-in-law, go now. It is a long way to Gurajāla. You had better resume your journey,' he said.

Bālacandra rode some distance with Ala Rācamallu to see him off. Ala Rācamallu then rode back a short distance with Bāluḍu. Bāluḍu again accompanied Ala Rācamallu a short distance. They went back and forth between their respective destinations.

Then Bāluḍu thought, 'Enough of this! If we continue to do this, my brother-in-law may happen to remember the *tulasi* necklace. He may ask to have it back.'

Bālacandruḍu accompanied Ala Rācamallu for a short distance and said, 'O Brother-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, you must go this way towards Gurajāla. I will return by that path to Mēḍapi. You must not accompany me this time. Look here, I am drawing proscriptions. These are the proscriptions: a proscription in the name of Cennayya of Mācerla; a proscription in the name of Pōtarāju; a proscription in the name of the feet of my father, Brahma Nāyuḍu; and a proscription in the name of the feet of Goddess Ankālaparamēśvari, Nakṣatravīramaṇḍali, Nāgabhayankari, Kāsulakaṭāri, Kanakanivāli, Ōmkāri, Mahāmkāḷi, Candika, Śambhavi, Jagadjanani, Ankālaparamēśvari. As the ocean is restricted by the 'sister bank',[43] so are the great ones of Palnāḍu restricted from transgressing Akka Pinakka.[44] I am drawing proscription in the name of the feet of Akka Pinakka. You must not follow me.'

Then, mounted on his ram, Bāluḍu returned to his house. The *tulasi* necklace he gave to his father. Brahma Nāyuḍu was very pleased to receive the *tulasi* necklace from the hands of his own son.

Meanwhile, Ala Rācamallu went sorrowing and grieving towards Gurajāla. On the way to Gurajāla he stopped in Mācerla. He was desirous of seeing the Cennakēśvarasvāmi Temple.

When Brahma Nāyuḍu lost his land to Nāyakurālu at the cock fight, he had gone to the Cennakēśvara Temple and said, 'Lord, you are my patron God. I have lost my land to Nāyakurālu at the cock fight, and I am going. Come with me.'

Cennakēśvara said, 'Wherever there is a battle, there you will fight. Who will support me? I shall not come.'

'My Lord, you are Hari, you are guru, you are life breath itself. Come with me,' he said.

When Cennakēśvara refused to come, Brahma Nāyuḍu cursed him, saying, 'So long as we mighty men of Palnāḍu are not here, here you must remain.' Then he locked the door, and taking the opening rod and key, he crossed at Shining Ford. From that day onward, the condition of the temple was this: fragrant grass, burr grass, fenugreek, amaranthus, and goose grass grew there.

Ala Rācamallu ordered his soldiers to open the temple, and he set it in order. Then looking around the temple, he worshipped the God. He said 'Lord, I am going as ambassador to Gurajāla. Kindly give me your leave.'

'What's this? He can go to Gurajāla, but he cannot come back. And he is asking me to kindly give him leave,' thought the God. The idol trembled and shook. The sacred gem in its forehead rolled round and round and fell out.

When the sacred gem rolled out, Ala Rācamallu became very angry. Putting out the lamps of the temple, he began to curse and revile the God: 'May your eastern gate be a thorn waste. May your northern door be a rock waste. May your southern gate be a pounded waste.'

When he had finished cursing the God, Ala Rācamallu rose up and came with his soldiers to Cerlaguḍipāḍu. At that time, in Gurajāla, all the elders were sitting in the court: Nāyakurālu, Nalagāma Rāju, Narasinga Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju. The Reḍḍi lords were there: Guravā Reḍḍi of Gurajāla, Mallā Reḍḍi of Māḍugula, and the headman of Adigoppala, Anappā Reḍḍi. The Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras were all in attendance.

Nāyakurālu was in this guise: she wore a jacket with a widow's cloth attached, a widow's cloth worn with an armour jacket. On her feet she wore . . . She wore a three-cubit blouse, a knotted . . . a . . ., and a braid the size of an elephant's trunk on her back. Dressed in this way, she carried a steel hone. She wore it on her shoulders. She was . . .

When Ala Rācamallu arrived at Cerlaguḍipāḍu, he had his war drum beaten. 'Gubal! Gubal! Gubal!' sounded the war drum. All the people in the capital city, Gurajāla, heard the sound. The people of the city thought like this: 'What does this mean, Nalagāma Rāju, Narasinga Rāja, Reḍḍi Lords? Since the day that Brahma Nāyuḍu lost his land in the cock fight, in these seven years, we have never heard the sound of a war drum. Could it be that Viṣṇu incarnate is coming today? No, Brahma Nāyuḍu would only come with the sound of conch and discus. Could it be someone else? Perhaps it is Peddanna. No, he would not sound the war drum.'

Looking out, they saw that it was the sound of their son-in-law Ala

Rācamallu's war drum. 'O Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju, it is the sound of the bronze war drum of our son-in-law, Ala Rācamallu. It is not right for us to remain seated.'

Nāyakurālu had an elephant brought out. On the elephant's back they affixed a howdah; from the howdah they hung pearl trappings. There were dancers, singers, and rope dancers. Vaiṣṇavite devotees came along and Jangams recited the *Basava Purāṇa*. Brāhmaṇs sang praises; heralds shouted encomiums. Dancing girls sang songs; Brāhmaṇ women threw sacred rice. The party from Gurajāla met their son-in-law, Ala Rācamallu.

'Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, dismount from your steed and sit on this elephant,' said Nalagāma Rāju.

'Why should I do that, Father-in-law? You are the elder. You sit on the elephant. I shall ride my horse,' he said.

'None of that! We should honour you. You mount the elephant. You are our son-in-law.'

'No, Father-in-law, you must ride the elephant,' he said.

Nāyakurālu looked at the Rājus and the elders. 'He has not come to visit his mother-in-law's house. It looks as if he has come as an ambassador from that other division of Palnāḍu.[45] We don't have any business with him. Let's go!' she said.

They returned to the court and took their respective seats. No one said a word.

The soldiers who accompanied Ala Rācamallu pitched their tents. As for Ala Rācamallu, he paced back and forth in between. Kannama Nīḍu sat on an elephant throne.

'You can depend upon Nāyakurālu to be untrustworthy. She is a master of spells, that minister, Nāyakurālu. Many Rājus before have died by her hand,' thought Kannama as he sat waiting.

Unable to stand it any longer, the father-in-law said, 'O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu!'

'What is it, Father-in-law?'

'From the time you lost your land to us at the cock fight, I have been assembling an army there.'

'What is the army that you have there, Father-in-law?'

'You want to know what I mean? Look there! Near Oppiceria, by the purifying fire pit, near the Gods, close to the pillar of the fallen Rāju, I have stationed a detachment of 800,000 valiant men and 800,000 valiant horsemen,' said Nalagāma Rāju. This was the magnitude of Nāyakurālu's force.

When he heard these words, Ala Rācamallu laughed aloud. Laughing, he said, 'Father-in-law, you have told me what a force you

have assembled. You have an army of elephants, horses, and camels. But my father-in-law, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, is waiting alone in Mēḍapi,' he said.

Some time passed.

'O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu!'

'What is it, Father-in-law?'

'Look there, 800,000 swordsmen, 900,000 . . . are stationed near Gurajāla.'

'My brother-in-law, Bāluḍu, is waiting for that army in Mēḍapi. Bāluḍu is waiting alone in Mēḍapi.'

Again some time passed. Again he spoke. 'O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu!' he said.

'What is it, Father-in-law?'

'Near Cintapalli, in the . . . a detachment of 1,900,000 proud elephants and 1,900,000 mahouts have been stationed by a Rāju.'

Ala Rācamallu laughed aloud and said, 'Father-in-law, Kannama Nīḍu alone is a match for an army like that.'

Hearing this, Kannama grasped his twelve-cubit broadsword. He preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened; he gnashed his teeth; his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit. He yelled 'A-a-ahoi' and leapt into the midst of the court. As he leapt, with his great display of power, Nalagāma Rāju's elephants fled to Nalagoṇḍa.[46] At Kannama's display of valour, Nalagāma Rāju's horses stamped the earth with all four feet and went galloping and stampeding away. At Kannama's display of might, Nāyakurālu's foot soldiers set one foot after the other and went running and scattering in all directions. The thrones in the court trembled and quaked and shook.

Again Nalagāma Rāju spoke. 'O Son-in-law! Ala Rācamallu!' he said.

'What is it, Father-in-law?'

'Do timid cowards who . . . Listen to what I am saying to you. Do those who have fled like timid, cowardly cattle have land or do they not?'

Ala Rācamallu was greatly angered at those words. Filled with wrath, he said, 'So, Fathers-in-law! Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju, you have listened to the words of Nāyakurālu. You seem to think that we fled, and you have likened us to timid and cowardly cattle. My father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu, does not know what you have said. If he hears what you have said, he will pulverize the whole of Gurajāla.'

Then Ala Rācamallu sent a party of soldiers to Mēḍapi.[47] He spoke to Kannama. 'Brother-in-law! Kannama!'

'What is it, Father?'

'Father, shall we have a word with your elder sister and then go?' said Ala Rācamallu. Ala Rācamallu had great affection for his wife, and his wife had great affection for him.

'Brother-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, you can depend upon Nāyakurālu to be untrustworthy. The minister, Nāyakurālu, is an employer of poisons. We must not tarry here. Let us be gone,' said Kannama.

'No, no! Listen to what I say. I shall have a word with your elder sister and take leave of her. After that we will go,' said Ala Rācamallu.

Kannama spoke, but Ala Rācamallu did not listen to his warning. He lay down in his tent. Kannama sat in his tent on a seat.

Meanwhile, Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi, Ala Rācamallu's wife, was informed of her husband's arrival. She had a great affection for her husband. Therefore, she prepared all manner of splendid food and sent it to him. On the way, Nāyakurālu spotted the maidservants taking the food to Ala Rācamallu.

Nāyakurālu said, 'What is this? It looks as if Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi has prepared a splendid meal for her husband. She has dispatched you to take it to him. O Women, these are the months of Caitra and Vaiśākha. It is the hot spring season, and the trees are without leaves.[48] It is extremely hot. The sun is blazing. You will be unable to bear the sun and wind. I have some rough maidservants; I will send them to take it for you.'

Thus did Nāyakurālu trick the maidservants and take the food to her house. In the food she mixed powerful deadly poisons. When she had finished mixing the poison with the food, she sent her maidservants with the mixture, instructing them what to say if questioned by Ala Rācamallu and Kannama Nīḍu.

'If they ask you what it is, you must tell them that the Rāju's wife, Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi, has sent their dinner. If they ask you whose maidservants you are, you must not tell them that you are my maidservants. You must tell them that you are Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi's maidservants,' she said and sent them on their way.

Kannama Nīḍu sat on his throne and watched. He saw the whole thing.[49] He saw Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi prepare the meal and call her maidservants. He saw Nāyakurālu take the food. He saw her send her own maidservants with the same food.

'Women, who are you?'

'Sir, we are Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi's maidservants.'

'O.K., what is that that you have with you?'

'Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi has prepared a meal and sent it to her husband.'

'Women, that is good. But the Rāju has just eaten, and he is sleeping in his tent.'

Now there were some scavenger dogs near by. They had not eaten for three days. Kannama called the maidservants. In the three baskets were three pots of food. He prepared three portions of the food and tossed them to the scavenger dogs. The dogs had been without food for three days. They were ravenous and quickly came running. They gobbled up the food. Deadly poison attacked their throats. The life departed out of them.

When Ala Rācamallu saw how they died, he was amazed. He flared up with anger; he was consumed with rage. He grasped his weapon tightly and said, 'Who are you! Whose maidservants are you?'

The girls trembled and shook. 'We are Nāyakurālu's maidservants,' they said.

'Is that so? Well, come here! That is all well and good. It seems that your Nāyakurālu has a great regard for my Rāju,' said Kannama.

He took the baskets off their heads. In place of the baskets he tied bundles of thorn brush. Then, turning the pots of poisoned food upsidedown over their heads, he tied their hands together and sent them on their way.

Nāyakurālu saw them coming. 'What trouble befell you?' said Nāyakurālu.

'Mother, today is the culmination of our troubles. If you cannot see for yourself what grief is in store for you, ask us.'

'What are you talking about? What troubles are you referring to?' asked Nāyakurālu.

'Kannama Nīḍu is coming. The fort of Gurajāla is the mortar of the oil-press; Kannama Nīḍu is the bullock that drives the press; the weapon in his hand is the roller; all the people of Gurajāla are the sesame seeds. He will press out the sesame, separating it into oil and cake. By nightfall he will complete his work and return to Mēḍapi.' This is what the maidservants said to Nāyakurālu.

Nāyakurālu spent that night in severe, heroic austerities. At dawn she rose up and went to the young son of the Śaivite priest.[50] She went in disguise.[51] 'O Young Man,' she said.

'What is it, Woman?'

'Do you know a way to kill Ala Rācamallu?' she asked.

'I do indeed!'

The young Śaivite priest took flowers and set out for Nalagāma Rāju's temple. In the third bunch he put poison. Putting a deadly poison in the flowers, he set out.

Ala Rācamallu detected the aroma of flowers in the air. 'O Father!

Kannama, from somewhere I smell the sweet scent of jasmine flowers. Do we have some jasmine with us? I don't think we do. Perhaps it is coming from the path. Go and see if anyone is coming along the path.'

Kannama looked. 'Brother-in-law, a boy is coming along the path. He has a basket of jasmine flowers.'

'Go and get some.'

Kannama went to the path. 'Hey, Young Fellow! What is that you have there, Young Fellow?' said Kannama Nīḍu.

'Sir, these are jasmine flowers for Nalagāma Rāju's God. I am going to make garlands and bouquets,' he said.

'Let me tell you something. Ala Rācamallu, the son-in-law of Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju, is here. He and his father-in-law have had an argument; that is why he has come here. Kindly give him a bunch of flowers,' said Kannama.

'Never! Threaten me, scold me, beat me, but I shall never give up these flowers,' said the boy.

'Why do you talk like that? He is their son-in-law. Give him just one bunch of flowers,' said Kannama.

'Never!' he said.

Then Kannama became very angry. He snatched the basket off the boy's head, stuck it under his arm, and struck the boy a blow. The boy went flying and began to cry. When he started crying, Kannama became calmer. He returned the basket to the boy's hand.

'Father, he is their son-in-law. The two of them had an argument. That is why he has pitched his tent here. Give him just one bunch of flowers,' he said.

The boy put down the basket. Before putting on the cover, he had placed the bunch containing the poison in the middle of the others. Now, pushing the others aside, he gave that one to Kannama. Kannama Nīḍu observed what he did.

'Brother-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, I sense some treachery in this bunch of flowers. Don't smell the sweet scent. Just hold them at a distance and appreciate their beauty. Don't do as we do at home, holding them in our hands and sniffing the sweet scent with our nostrils. There is some power in these flowers, some secret power. That is how it appears to me,' he said.

'I will do as you say, Brother-in-law,' said Ala Rācamullu.

Ala Rācamallu took the flowers in his hand, but he did not heed Kannama's warning. He took the flowers in his hands. He sniffed them with his nostrils. The deadly poison entered his nose along with the scent of the flowers. A blister the size of an *usiri* fruit arose in his nose; a blister the size of a *yappa* fruit arose in his nostrils. His red body

burned and became black. He was consumed by hot flames. . . . His body felt as though it was being cut by barbers's razors; his body felt as though it was being cut by cock-fighting knives.

'A-a-a-aw! Brother-in-law! Kannama, my life is leaving me. Purify the earth and place me there,' he said.

When Ala Rācamallu asked to be placed on the earth, Kannama said, 'Brother-in-law! Ala Rācamallu, you did not heed my warning. Did I not say that you could depend upon Nāyakurālu to be untrustworthy? You did not listen to my advice. Now see what has happened,' he said.

Kannama had cow manure brought, and he purified the earth. Kannama lowered Ala Rācamallu to the ground.

Now Ala Rācamallu had great love for his wife. 'O Brother-in-law! Kannama, call your elder sister, Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi,' said Ala Rācamallu.

No sooner did he hear Ala Rācamallu's words than Kannama went running to Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi's house. He came running to Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi's house.

'O Elder Brother! Kannama, is your brother-in-law in good health or is he in ill health?'

'O Elder Sister! Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi, my brother-in-law is not well. He is in grave danger.'

Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi's heart broke and she fell to the earth. She was terribly grieved. 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, could you not find another wife such as I?' she grieved.

Then Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi went straight to the court. 'O Father! Narasinga Rāju and Nalagāma Rāju, you have unjustly listened to a woman's words and slain my husband. You have listened to Nāyakurālu's evil counsel and killed my husband. Therefore, for my husband's sacred thread, [I will have] a thousand sacred threads. For my marriage cord, [I will have] a thousand marriage cords, thirty bushels of bangles, . . .If there is one sacred thread too few, . . . My younger brother, Bāluḍu, will pull off your head along with the veins and tendons. I am vowing this before my father-in-law, Komma Rāju. Look! Look at my passion!' she said.

Then she said, 'The one who is born as a girl is the destroyer of the line, there is no doubt about it. . .'[52]

Thus did Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi curse her father's younger brother. Then she went to her husband. She held her husband's head and cried grievous tears. Pearl-like tears soaked her whole face.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, could you not find another woman such as I? Why did you come to this sinful city,

Gurajāla? You can depend upon Nāyakurālu to be untrustworthy, My Lord!' she cried.

The sounds of Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi's weeping reached her husband's ears. He looked in his wife's direction. 'Wedded Wife, whatever be the reason, the dictates of fate cannot be avoided. This is the way that Brahma has written it. Why do you weep? Why do you grieve?' he said.

As Ala Rācamallu spoke, the life departed through his eyes. Quickly the life passed out through his eyes. Kannama Niḍu and Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi took him to Mēḍapi. Brahma Nāyuḍu saw them coming and knew what had happened. He had cow dung brought and purified the ground. He drew a five-coloured lotus on the ground; he spread a silk cloth in the lotus; on the silk cloth he laid Ala Rācamallu; round about he arranged heaps;[53] with a ewer he brought water. Thus did Brahma Nāyuḍu, Viṣṇu incarnate. He went to Ala Rācamallu's head and spoke a word of power in his ear. As he did so, Ala Rācamallu rolled from one side to the other. A second time, Brahma Nāyuḍu spoke a word of power in his ear. He sprinkled holy water in the name of the feet of Cennuḍu and in the name of the feet of Śankara. Ala Rācamallu rose up on his arms, and the poison that Nāyakurālu gave was dispersed. A third time, Brahma Nāyuḍu spoke a word of power in Ala Rācamallu's ear. He sat up.

'What happened, Son-in-law? What happened in Gurajāla, Ala Rācamallu?' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

'I went to Gurajāla and they came out to meet me. They offered me an elephant, but I did not mount it. They told me that they had a detachment stationed near Oppicerla. I gave them an answer for that. Next they told me that Bonasinga Rāju was stationed with a detachment in Nāyakurālu pass, a detachment in Bāluḍu's name. I gave them an answer for that. A third time they said that they had a detachment in Cintapalli. I gave them an answer for that, too. Next they said, "Should those who have fled like timid cattle have land or should they not?" I became very angry at that. I was angry because they said were were like timid cattle. Father-in-law! Brahma Nāyuḍu, I did not have your leave. If you had given me leave, I would have destroyed all of Gurajāla,' said Ala Rācamallu.

'Very good! That is fine, but I will give you breath. Do you wish to live?'

Ala Rācamallu laughed aloud. He said, 'Father-in-law, I fought at Kāncī, and I uprooted the banner pole from Kāncī. I fought at Uṭṭi, and I cut the strings of the pot hanger at Uṭṭi. I fought at the sea. There I took the horse, Savarālagōḍugu, as a prize. Today I fought with my

father-in-law, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju.[54] I have fought enough battles. The deeds that I have done are enough. I have no desire for leftover life breath. If you give me leave, by your grace, I will enter Vaikuṇṭha. Father-in-law, give me your permission,' said Ala Rācamallu.

He removed the *tulasi* necklace that Brahma Nāyuḍu had put round his neck. Then Ala Rācamallu entered Vaikuṇṭha.

NOTES

1 *twenty-nine villages*: Elsewhere the number is always given as ninety-nine, and I have no explanation for the discrepancy.

2 The connection between the villages and their supposed founders seems to be an alliterative one. There is a Sūryārāvupēṭa, Dēverakoṇḍa Tāluk, Nalgoṇḍa District, and a Pērvēḍula, Miryālagūḍa Tāluk, Nalgoṇḍa District, but I have not identified Kanakādripēṭa. Cennakēśvara is often called Kanakādri Cennayya in a number of sources, but Gāleyya never uses this appellation.

3 *pair of Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rājus*: Apparently Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju and Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, two younger brothers of Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju. The two are of no importance anywhere in the epic.

4 *it is not good . . . subject to attack*: This is in the form of a proverb, but I have not found it in any collections.

5 *Maddi Maḍugu*: A village in Accampēt Tāluk, Mahabūbunagar District, it is at the confluence of the Diṇḍi and Kriṣṇā rivers just west of Palnāḍu.

6 *sacred . . . Palnāḍu*: these are said to be the prototype for the drums that are used to accompany the epic.

7 Bhīmavaram and Koccerlakōṭa are villages in Darśi Tāluk, Ongōlu District. The remaining eight villages are in Mārkāpur Tāluk, Ongōlu District. I have omitted some additional villages which were not clear. An annual Cennakēśvarasvāmi festival is held in Mēḍapi. Cennakēśvarasvāmi, Ankamma, and the Palnāḍu Heroes are honoured. The Cennakēśvarasvāmi temple in Mārkāpur is particularly sacred to the Mālas, who are devotees of Viṣṇu. Republic of India, *Census of Andhra Pradesh, Fairs and Festivals, Kurnool District*, pp. 24–5, 30–1.

8 There is no previous information about how long the exile should be. Seven is, however, an important number throughout.

9 *Dāsu*: lit., slave, servant, etc. It is a name assumed by devotees of Viṣṇu.

10 *Kani Sōma Rāju . . . Nandi Sōma Rāju*: It is unclear who these Rājus are. They are probably either the brothers or the ancestors of Gajapati Sōma Rāju.

11 Oppicerla borders Kārempūḍi on the west and lies on the road from Kārempūḍi to Gurajāla. 'Purifying fire pit' probably refers to the scene of a widow immolation. I have omitted some particulars here which are unclear.

12 *Brother-in-law*: Rāṇa Komma Rāju's son, Ala Rācamallu, is the husband of Ratnāla Pēramā Dēvi, daughter of Nalagāma Rāju of Gurajāla. Brahma Nāyuḍu, being aligned with the Rājus of Palnāḍu, is elder brother to Callama Dēvi, Rāṇa Komma Rāju's wife, by the ideal of maternal cross cousin marriage. By the same logic, Ala Rācamallu is Brahma Nāyuḍu's son-in-law, and Bāluḍu and Kannama are Ala Rācamallu's brothers-in-law.

13 The particulars of place and composition of the force are again unclear.

14 It is the mother's authority to give or not give permission. In another

version that I recorded, Cennayya states clearly that the father has no right to make this decision.

15 *seven days of necklaces*: A common way of indicating a full set of jewellery. By extension, and for metrical purposes, Gāleyya also says 'seven days of saris'.

16 i.e. Komma Rāju.

17 The traditional ambassador would be a Brāhmaṇ.

18 Ala Rācamallu is the last living heir to the throne of Kalyāṇ.

19 The relationship of 'brother-in-law' is a particularly close one in the Telugu kinship structure. Kannama and Ala Rācamallu are considered to be brothers-in-law.

20 *my parents' people*: The Rājus of Palnāḍu and by extension Brahma Nāyuḍu himself. As what follows shows, she actually means Brahma Nāyuḍu, himself.

21 *You must not wear . . . by your parents' people*: Apparently some reference to a period of time after which a falling-out is final.

22 The description of Callama Dēvi's attire is extensive, and I have omitted some that is unclear.

23 *Tripurāntakam*: A village in Mārkāpur Tāluk, Ongōlu District, it was of considerable importance during the epic period. It has an important Śiva temple today.

24–6 I have omitted titles which were unclear in the recording.

27 *Horseman*: *rautu*. Here it seems to be equated with a Velama.

28 It was customary to put a picture of a defeated enemy in a humiliating position. Such pictures were customarily placed on anklets, but they could also be put on a spittoon or other degrading places.

29 *Rāghava*: One of the names by which Lord Rāma goes. It is sometimes used as a given name in Palnāḍu today.

30 This is the same place where the great cock fight was held. It is near the Pāluvāyī railway stop. Some large cairns mark the spot.

31 *sacred mark of Viṣṇu*: *nāmamu*, the upright mark drawn on the forehead of Vaiṣṇavites.

32 The distance between the Candravanka and the place where the battle takes place is about 6 miles.

33 *Āṇjanēya*: Hanumān, the devoted servant of Lord Rāma. He is a popular deity in the Telugu country, probably more popular than Rāma himself.

34 *pull out the teeth that bite his lower lip when he is angry*: humble his pride.

35 *I fought at Kāñci . . . as a prize*: These claims may have some connection with actual historical events. I have not identified Uṭṭi, but it could be the fort of Guṭṭi, which the Kālacuris invested for several years (1158–64). K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'The Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇi', in G. Yazdani, ed., *Early History of the Deccan*, p. 461. *Uṭṭi Koṭṭuḍam* is a trial of skill in rural areas of A.P.: a pot hanger is suspended from a pulley; the women jerk it up while the men try to cut it down. The reference here may simply be to his accomplishments at such a game rather than at a specific place.

36 It is the thumb that controls the weapon.

37 Note that his mother had given another excuse for his absence.

38 It is customary for the women of the house to shampoo the men's hair.

39 His sin is the sin of leaving without his mother's permission. Callama Dēvi gives her permission to prevent him from committing the sin.

40 In South India, it is customary when bidding someone farewell to tell them to 'go and come back'. Omitting the invitation to return is tantamount to telling someone to 'get lost' or even, as in this case, to die.

41 There is a tree called the *mārēḍu*, but I have not found an *ārēḍu* tree, though there is an *āre* tree. Probably the two are simply juxtaposed for sound value.

42 *Kandlēru*: A small tributary of the Guṇḍlakāmma River, it rises in the hillls south of Kārempūḍi and flows southwards.

43 In Telugu folklore there is an imaginary bank beyond which the ocean must not transgress. This is called the *celiyalikaṭṭu*, 'sister bank', because of the taboo of transgressing a sister.

44 Akka Pinakka, it will be remembered, is the daughter of Śivasingāla Rāju and Śivanāgāla Dēvi. Brahma Nāyuḍu brought her from Śivanandi Fort. She is unmarried and probably a Vīra Śaiva spiritual leader, though this is never explained. She is treated as a sister by all the men of Palnāḍu. Thus, it is a powerful sexual taboo that is being invoked. The name is a combination of 'Akka' (elder sister or mother) and 'Pinakka' (younger of two or more elder sisters). What little is said about Akka Pinakka in the epic is reminiscent of what is known of Mahādēvi, a younger contemporary of Basava. Generally known as Akka, she betrothed herself to Śiva and refused any human lover. She left Kalyān and went to Śrīśailam where she devoted herself to Cennamallikārjuna. (A. K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*, pp. 111–14.) It is possible that it is this person that is remembered in Palnāḍu, but it is more likely that she is another woman who was respected for the same reasons, or that there was a Śaivite tradition of women devotees on this pattern. The term 'Akka' is also applied to Goddesses, but here 'Akka Pinakka' appears to be a human.

45 A Rāju son-in-law would probably accept such an honour, but an ambassador would not be treated in such a lofty manner.

46 *Nalagoṇḍa*: A mountain to the south of Kārempūḍi, it is not to be confused with the district and town of the same name.

47 *sent a party of soldiers to Mēḍapi*: Presumably to report developments to Brahma Nāyuḍu. They are not mentioned again.

48 *Caitra and Vaisākha*: March–May. South India really has no spring season, but the idea of a spring season has been imported from North India. The hot season begins in March and lasts until mid-June. During these months a strong, dry, west wind blows in Palnāḍu, virtually without interruption.

49 Kannama is sitting some miles away from the events that are taking place.

50 *Śaivite priest: tambaḷavāḍu*, a Śūdra who tends to the daily ceremonial needs of a Śiva temple.

51 *in disguise*: Presumably to disguise herself from others who might see her going to the boy, but not from the boy himself.

52 This is a bit of verse which Gāleyya has heard somewhere. The first line fits fairly well in the situation, but after that it either does not fit or he forgets, and he trails off.

53 *heaps*: Apparently some unspecified offering, probably cooked rice.

54 *Today I fought with my father-in-law, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju*: This is out of context here, but Gāleyya has not made the slight adjustment in the formula to make it fit.

Story 13

The Game of Tops*

Bāluḍu and his brothers wish to play, and Aitamma has tops made. The game of tops. Bāluḍu's top strikes a Kōmaṭi girl. The girl tells him where the men have gone. Aitamma tries to dissuade her son from going. Bāluḍu goes to Nāgārjunakoṇḍa to get the serpent top. Bāluḍu promises human flesh to the top.

After Ala Rācamallu's death on the mission to Gurajāla, Brahma Nāyuḍu gives his son, Bāluḍu, to Ala Rācamallu's father, Komma Rāju, to assuage his grief. Then the mighty men of Palnāḍu go to the Kāryamapūḍi battlefield. For three months and fifteen days they remain there, endeavouring to negotiate a peaceful settlement. As they are considered little more than children, Bāluḍu and his brothers are not informed about what is happening. They do not go to the battlefield.[1]

Bāluḍu and his brothers go to his mother, Aitamma, and tell her that they would like to play tops. Aitamma has tops made for each of the boys individually. The Mangala boy's top is ranked 1,000; the Kummari's, 2,000; the Cākala's, 3,000; the Kansali's, 4,000; the Kammari's, 5,000; the Velama's, 6,000; The Brāhmaṇ's, 10,000. But Bāluḍu, the son of Brahma Nāyuḍu, gets a top ranked 12,000.[2] The tops are multi-coloured with strings of silk and tips of silver.

When the tops are finished and each boy has his own, they go to the *jammi* tree to play. Bāluḍu mounts his ram, and together with his brothers, he sets forth. The townspeople gather to watch the game. A Brāhmaṇ girl and a Kōmaṭi[3] girl pick up water pots as if going for water. Taking leave of their parents, they follow the crowd to the *jammi* tree.

Bālacandruḍu addresses the crowd, warning the women to stay back so that they will not be hurt. He prays to Cennakēśvara, repeats his warning, and winds the string. He gives the pearled string a vigorous yank, and the top spins. It lands on the ground, leaps into the sky, and then spins for a while on the stone slab. From the slab it bounds into the sky once more and glows and sparkles as it spins. Then the top

*Detailed summary.

descends, striking the Kōmaṭi girl's ankle and pinning it to the ground. Terrified, the girl swoons.

When she regains consciousness, the girl is enraged. In her anger she tells Bāluḍu where the men have gone, suggesting that if he, too, went to Kāryamapūḍi, his exuberance would be directed towards some useful end. She scolds him and reviles him unmercifully.

After hearing what the Kōmaṭi girl has to say, Bāluḍu and his brothers go straight to their mother, Aitamma. They demand to know where the elders have gone. Bāluḍu tells his mother what happened at the *jammi* tree, how he hurt the Kōmaṭi girl, and how she scolded him. He demands that his mother tell him the truth about his father's whereabouts. He wants to know whether the Kōmaṭi girl spoke truly or falsely.

Aitamma tries to put her son off. She tells the boys to go on with their games and not to worry about their father. But Bāluḍu refuses to accept it, and Aitamma is forced to admit that all the mighty men have gone to Kāryamapūḍi. When he hears where they have gone, Bāluḍu asks permission for himself and his brothers to take up arms.

Aitamma swoons and reproaches the Kōmaṭi girl. She paints a gruesome picture of the horrors of war: piles of corpses, heaps of heads, stacks of bones, and elephants trumpeting in wrath and pain. Then, playing on his sympathies, she tells Bāluḍu about the trouble she went through for his birth. She begs him to forget about the battle.

Bāluḍu has another request. He wants to have the top that the serpent maidens and the nine Brāhmaṇs gave to his father. Aitamma knows of the top, and she knows the story of Brahma Nāyuḍu's birth,[4] but she knows nothing of the whereabouts of the top. She advises Bāluḍu to ask his grandmother, Śīlamma.

When Bāluḍu asks his grandmother, she tells him how Brahma Nāyuḍu played with the top for a long time and finally cast it into Nāgārjuna cave on Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.[5] In the cave where the top rests is a garden with many trees bearing flowers and fruit.

Pleased with his grandmother's words, Bāluḍu and his brothers go directly to Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. Entering the cave, they see the wonderful plants and ornamentation. Bāluḍu dresses for battle and takes the serpent top. But as he moves it, the top cries out for a human corpse.

Bāluḍu has no corpse to give, but promises to give one when he goes to war. He promises two things to the serpent top: the top that struck the Kōmaṭi girl, and the head of Bangālā Rāju as a sacrifice. He will behead Bangālā Rāju whom Nāyakurālu has posted at the Nāyakurālu pass. The meat of the Rāju's head he will offer as a sacrifice. Only after

Bāluḍu makes this contract with the top does it allow him to play with it.

Taking the top and some fruit and flowers, Bāluḍu returns to Mēḍapi with his brothers.

Later, Nāyakurālu's armies are stretched out the length and breadth of Palnāḍu. Bāluḍu fights with the vast army, throws Bangālā Rāju to the earth and beheads him. Then Bāluḍu offers the head of Bangālā Rāju as a sacrifice. Placing three *lingas* against the *āre* tree, he offers the head to them. Then, cutting up the head and offering it benzoin and cassia, Bāluḍu and his brothers do obeisance. Anointing the head with holy water, Bāluḍu makes it speak. Then he offers it to the top and returns to Mācerla.[6]

Notes

1 The boys are at the borderline between childhood and adulthood. They are fourteen years old.

2 These numbers are not adjectival to anything, but seem to reflect an approximate ranking of the castes involved. Mangala (barber), Kummari (potter), Cākala (washerman), Kansali (goldsmith), and Kammari (blacksmith) are the principal artisan castes in the area. Bāluḍu is also a Velama, but he ranks well above the Brāhmaṇ and twice as high as his fellow Velama. Many of the most important castes in the tradition, i.e. Golla, Māla, Rāju, Bōya, are not represented.

3 *Kômaṭi*: The merchant caste. Few oral or folk sources have anything good to say about Kōmaṭis, and the girl is often blamed for the death of Bāluḍu.

4 See 'The Birth of Brahma Nāyuḍu', p.157 for an account of the origin of this top.

5 *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*: Nāgārjuna Hill, an ancient Buddhist site from about the beginning of the Christian era. It was an important hillfort under several medieval dynasties. It is now an island in the middle of the lake behind the Nāgārjunasāgar Dam on the Kriṣṇā River at the western boundary of Palnāḍu.

6 Actually, according to all other evidence, Bāluḍu never returns to Mācerla alive after his battle with Bangāla Rāju. Gāleyya seems to have mixed up his stories, a situation which would not cause much difficulty if the stories were told one at a time as they traditionally are. The death of Bangāla Rāju takes place in Episode 9: 'Bālacandruḍu's Battle with Bangāla Rāju' of Story 14: 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu'.

Story 14

The Story of Bālacandruḍu

Episode 1
Bāluḍu's Conversation with his Mother*

Bāluḍu asks permission to go to Kâryamapûḍi.
Aitamma tries to persuade him to stay home.
Bāluḍu tells of his previous births.

Bālacandruḍu and his brothers grow weary of playing tops and go to Aitamma, Bāluḍu's mother. When they do obeisance to her, Aitamma protests. She tells Bāluḍu that one like himself, to whom the Rājus bow down, should not bow to her, a woman. But Bāluḍu affectionately explains the propriety of bowing to the mother who carried him in her womb and nursed him. Aitamma is pleased by her son's words, but she is concerned by the change that has come over him since she last saw him. When he went to play tops at the *jammi* tree, he was beautiful and radiant like the full moon. Now he is downcast and has lost his radiance. Aitamma asks what is troubling him.

When Bāluḍu points out the fact that all the elders have left the city, his mother tells him that Brahma Nāyuḍu has gone to the court of a foreign Rāju. Bāluḍu is enraged at this deceit and informs her that he knows full well where the elders have gone. They have gone to Kāryamapūḍi to avenge the death of his brother-in-law, Ala Rācamallu. Bāluḍu warns his mother than unless he goes to join them there will be no battle and no liberation for the Heroes. He asks permission to go to Kāryamapūḍi.

Aitamma's heart breaks. She describes the horrors of war, the elephants, armies, horsemen, heaps of heads, piles of bones, corpses, etc. She tries to convince him that he is but a child, unable to bear the terrors of war.

When the horrors of war fail to deter Bāluḍu, Aitamma appeals to his sympathy. She describes all the effort to which she went for his birth, the birth of her only son. But Bāluḍu is unmoved. He likens himself to a chili pepper which, though small, is not deficient in hotness.

*Detailed summary.

Bāluḍu tells the stories of his previous births. He was born as Rohitāśya to Hariścandra Mahārāja and Candramati Dēvi.[1] He was born as Kuśa to Rāma and Sīta in Ayodhya. He fought for seven days with his father, at length tying him up in chains.[2] He was also born as Niśankamatuḍu, a devotee of Viṣṇu, to Triśanka Mahārāja, a devotee of Śiva.[3]

One day Triśanka Mahārāja asked his son, Niśankamatuḍu, to show him Hari. When he struck the iron pillar, Narasimha Avatāra revealed himself in the pillar. Another day, the father put sixty-six *lingas* round the boy's neck. Niśankamatuḍu ground them to a powder and swallowed them. It was Triśanka Mahārāja's daily habit to go to the Śiva temple and decapitate himself, offering his head at Śiva's feet. After worshipping in this way, he returned his head to its original place and wore it home. Seeing this, the boy informed his father that his worship was leftover, defiled worship.

When Triśanka Mahārāja asked Niśankamatuḍu to demonstrate his own devotion, the boy decapitated himself and offered his head at Śiva's feet. Another head took its place. Again and again he made the offering, and each time the head was replaced. This he did sixty-six times.

Gratified, Śambhumūrti offered him a boon. The boon that Niśankamatuḍu asked, and received, was to have sixty-six bodies for his sixty-six heads. These were provided by Śiva. They are the Sixty-six Heroes,[4] matchless men with neither mother nor father.

In another birth, Bāluḍu was born to Siriyāla Mangamma and Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu as Siriyāla Pāpanna. In that birth he was prepared by his mother and served as a human meat curry.[5]

Aitamma reminds Bāluḍu that now he has been born to people of Kuntala, to Brahma Nāyuḍu and Aitamma of Palnāḍu.[6] She asks to hear the story of Siriyāla Pāpanna, how she prepared him three times and served him to Śiva. Bāluḍu agrees to tell the story.

Episode 2
The Story of Siriyāla Pāpanna

Every day Siriyāla Mangamma feeds a crore of Jangams. The Jangams test her devotion. The Gods choose Śiva to test her. Śiva makes the Jangams appear to be one less than a crore. Mangamma sends Cirutoṇḍa to find another Jangam. Śiva appears as a leprous Jangam. Cirutoṇḍa invites him to the feast. He requests the flesh of a seven-year-old boy. Mangamma and Cirutoṇḍa agree to serve him their son. Śiva tests Siriyāla Pāp-

anna's devotion. The boy is killed and cooked. Mangamma hides the head. Śiva demands the head, too. He asks that their child come and eat with him. Mangamma calls her son and he appears. Śiva grants a boon. All the people of the city are transported to Kailāsa.

Every day Siriyāla Mangamma cooked fine food in a curd pot.

One day a crore of Jangams came, saying, 'In the Kali Age, Siriyāla Mangamma is the greatest devotee. There is no greater devotee than she.'

This was the reputation that Siriyāla Mangamma had acquired.

'We must receive the fruits of her devotion,' they said.

They praised their patron God, Śambhumūrti. For three hours a downpour of rain fell as if from elephants' trunks. It was a torrent. Thunder rolled; lightning flashed; the wind howled; all the gullies and creeks were filled up.

The crore of Jangams arrived. Siriyāla Mangamma, that great soul, spread fine mats on the ground and seated the crore of Jangams. She looked at her supplies, and found everything there in abundance. Nothing was lacking. Only kindling was in short supply.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, we have everything we need except firewood. Go to the market, find some firewood, and bring it to me,' she said.

Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu[7] went to the market. Normally there were wood sellers selling firewood there 365 days a year. That day, by the contrivance of Īśvara, all the wood sellers had disappeared. He returned home.

'Wedded Wife!'

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Lord, what is it?'

'I looked in all the streets and markets of the town, but there was not a wood seller to be seen.'

'Wait! Come here,' she said.

The woman went to the storage shelf. Carefully stored there were chests. She took them down. In the chests were silk clothing. She removed all the silk clothing and soaked it in oil. Then she used it as fuel for the fire.

She prepared sixty thousand measures of rice and ten thousand measures of legumes.[8] She made soup, curries, condiments, pickles, legumes, and rice. She made *pānakam, junnu*,[9] pickles, and clarified butter. She prepared all of the finest foods. She used excellent fine rice, perfect legumes, dried prepared eggplants, *vaḍiyālu, appālu*, creamy curds, *miṭāmbaramulu, abbaṭlu, bōbaṭlu, araselu, pūrnālu,*

garelu, būrelu, and fine *appaḍālu*.[10] The vegetables were choice quality, and the clarified butter was from cows.[11]

When the feast was ready, she served it to the Jangams. She rang the bell, blew the conch, and asked them to eat. When they had eaten, she gave them *tāmbūlam* and they began chewing.

They said to themselves, 'We have come to test Siriyāla Mangamma's devotion. We must find a way to test her. She has given us everything, omitting nothing. Let us ask her for one more thing.'

'O Woman! Siriyāla Mangamma!'

'What is it, Father, Great Soul?'

'Mother, we have eaten a splendid feast. But there is one more thing that we would like to have.'

'What is it, Great Soul? What is it that you want?'

'Right now, we would like to have some sweet sugar cane.'

'Wait! Wait just a moment, Great Soul. There is a cane field with sugar cane just for great souls like yourselves,' she said.

Then she sent her husband, saying, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, take your trident to the sugar cane field, cut up all the cane that you can carry, and bring it back.'

Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu took his trident to the field and began to cut cane. He tied the sugar cane in a bundle, placed it on his head, and started home. The cane was wet from the rain and it was very heavy, but with great difficulty he managed to carry it. When he got home, the woman chopped the cane into sections and gave it to the crore of Jangams.

As the Jangams ate, they thought, 'This woman has perfect devotion. Whatever we ask she provides.'

Meanwhile, the thirty-three crores of Gods—Brahma, Īśvara, and Śiva—were having a discussion. They said, 'In all the four ages—Krita, Trēta, Dvāpara, and Kali—there have been great souls who have performed meritorious acts. But in the Kali Age, Siriyāla Mangamma is the greatest devotee. She and Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu, that great soul, have an only son who is seven years old. We have tried to shake her devotion, but we have been unsuccessful. Father! Śankara, you go and try something.'

Īśvara set out with conch, bell, mendicant's pouch, and banner pole. By his power of illusion,[12] he caused the Jangams to number one less that a crore. Mangamma would not serve less than a crore of Jangams. There had to be exactly a crore. Three hundred and sixty-five days a year she fed a crore of Jangams. That day, by the power of illusion of Śankara, Brahma, and Viṣṇu, there was one less than a crore of Jangams.

Īśvara assumed the form of a leper. He was plagued by leprosy; his body was full of disease; large worms swarmed in his flesh; bloody puss oozed from his body. He was totally leprous.

In the city, by the stream, was a banyan tree. He sat down under the tree.

A crore of Jangams came to Śivakānci[13] city where Siriyāla Mangamma dwelt. She prepared a splendid feast for them and asked, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, all these Jangams are sitting here waiting to eat. Count them.'

When he counted the Jangams, there was one less than a crore.

'Wedded Wife!'

'What is it, Lord of Breath, Master of Life, Heart Stealer, Lord?'

'There is one Jangam too few.'

When she heard these words, her heart broke and she fell to the earth. She was deeply grieved, thinking that all her preparations were for nought.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, go to the city of Śivakānci, find another Jangam, and bring him here. If you do not bring one, I am no longer your wife and you are no longer my husband,' she said.

Then Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu went to Śivakānci, and searched throughout the city. There were always many Jangams there, but on that day, through the power of illusion of Śiva, he did not see a single Jangam.

He returned to his house and said, 'Wedded Wife, I looked everywhere but I found no Jangams.'

'Why stop there? If you don't find a Jangam in Śivakānci, you must go somewhere else. If there are no Jangams in Śivakānci city, they must be somewhere else. Lord of Breath, go to Parvatam. At Parvatam are many Jangams. You must find one, somewhere, and bring him here. If you bring a Jangam, I am your wife, and you are my husband.'

He went along, and at length he came to the banyan tree in the grove by the stream at the edge of Śivakānci city. There sat the great soul, Śankara. Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu ran up and fell on his feet.

'Hey, who are you?'

'Sir, I am your devotee. I am your disciple.'

'What is your name?'

'My surname is Siriyāla. I am called Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu. My wife, your devotee, is named Siriyāla Mangamma. We always prepare good food in curd pots and serve it to Jangams. Today there was one Jangam too few. That is why I am searching all over Śivakānci. Now, Great Soul, I have found you, and you must come.'

'How can that be? How can I come? See my condition; see how I am suffering,' he said.

'Never mind, Great Soul, I will take you.'

'It will be good if you take me, and I will be glad to come. But I have this illness and it will be difficult for the crore of Jangams. I am afflicted with leprosy, Father.'

'Great Soul, you have nothing to fear. I will take you.'

'I have one more question. It will be good of you to take me, but perhaps it will be some trouble for your wife.'

'It will be no trouble, Father. I will take you.'

'O.K., I will come, but first let me tell you something. I went to Mount Himatgiri. A great soul who sees all said to me, "Young Fellow!"

' "Yes, Father?"

' "How long ago did you begin this pilgrimage?"

' "Father, I began three years ago."

' "I will give you a suggestion. Will you follow my advice?"

' "I will, Lord."

' "You must have a mother's first-born son. She must not have a second. The boy must be not more nor less than seven years old. He must be exactly seven years of age. That boy must be butchered, and you must partake of his flesh. Whenever you eat such a meal, no matter who serves it to you, you will be cured of your affliction," he said.

'If you promise me such a meal, I will come. If not, I will not come.'

'Great Soul! Īśvara! Jangam Preceptor, you have given us only one boy. We have only one child. The boy is neither more nor less than seven years old. Come, I will serve you the flesh of that boy.'

'You are agreeable. But will your wife also give her consent? Go and discuss it with your wife. If you both decide that you want to do it, come and get me and I will go with you.'

Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu went and told the plan to his wife. She did not want her husband to go back on his word and she agreed to do it. Together the husband and wife went to the Jangam.

When they got there, the Jangam said, 'What do you say, Woman? Do you agree?'

'I do agree. Will you come?'

'How can I come? If you hold my hand, it will disintegrate. If you hold my head, it will disintegrate. My entire body is soft.'

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, you wear a silk cloak. Spread it on the ground and make the Jangam sit on it. When he is seated, tie it up in a bundle and put it on your head. That is the way we will take him.'

Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu spread the silk cloak on the ground. He seated the Jangam on it and tied it up as one ties up a bundle of grass. The two of them raised the bundle and put it on his head. When they did so, Īśvara oozed bloody pus.

'O Father! Jangam Preceptor, your pus and blood is Śiva's sandalwood paste for my Śiva. Your scales are fine white rice for my Śiva. Let's go,' he said.

As they went along, the bundle became as heavy as if he were carrying Mount Himatgiri.

'Sir! Jangam Preceptor, when we lifted you up, you were light. But as we walk along, you have become very very heavy. Even if I break my back carrying you, I will never abandon you, Jangam Preceptor, Śankara.'

They took him home. When they got there, they untied the bundle and seated him in the midst of the Jangams.

The crore of Jangams said, 'Woman! Siriyāla Mangamma!'

'What is it, Father?'

'We cannot eat your food, Siriyāla Mangamma. What is the meaning of this. You found a leper somewhere or the other, and you have seated him in our midst. What does this mean, Woman?' they said.

'Wait! Wait, Great Soul. I mixed agalloch, rosewater, perfume, flowers, and fine sandalwood. I prepared it as one prepares areca nut and betel leaves. I have also cooked a feast for you crore of Jangams and this Jangam. Great Soul, I have prepared all this with my own hands. There is nothing remaining for me to do. Blow the conches; rings the bells; eat your meal, Father.'

The crore of Jangams had no idea what was happening. The leprous Jangam looked angrily at the food which has been served to him and said, 'O Woman! Siriyāla Mangamma, I cannot look at your face. You are guilty of the five sins;[14] you are a traitor to your caste; your deeds are evil.'

'Why do you say that, Jangam Preceptor? What do you lack?'

'Where is the food that you promised me, Woman?'

'Wait! Wait, Jangam Preceptor,' she said.

Siriyāla Mangamma had a child called Cirutoṇḍa Pāpuḍu. Siriyāla Pāpuḍu[15] was her only child. He was at school.

She went to the door and called 'Siriyāla Pāpayya! My Little Son! Come running, Golden Vessel! O Father! Pāpayya, I will give you butter! Come running! I will serve you sugar! O Father! Pāpayya, I will give you grapes! Come to me! O Father! Pāpayya, I will give you jackfruit! Come running! Come quickly, and I will give you a great lime!'

When he heard his mother's call, the boy stood up in class and listened.

'Father! Teacher!'

'What is it Child? Why do you stand up?'

'I hear my mother calling me home. I must see what she wants.'

'Go see what she wants, and hurry back.'

He took his slate and books and went home.

Īśvara knew the devotion of the mother and father, but he did not know about the child. He had to find out.

The Jangam sat among the other Jangams and said, 'Hey! Who are you?'

'Sir, my family name is Siriyāla. My mother's name is Siriyāla Mangamma. My father's name is Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu. I am called Siriyāla Pāpuḍu.'

'Father, who called you?'

'My mother.'

'Pāpayya, I can't look at your mother's face. She is guilty of the five great sins; she is a traitor to her caste; her deeds are evil,' said the Jangam.

'But Father! Great Soul! Sir Jangam, my parents are not that kind of people. Did they fail to feed you? Did they fail to honour you with gifts? What have they failed to do?'

'Father, they served me food; they gave me alms; and they gave me clothing. All that was well and good. But they found a leprous Jangam somewhere. He ordered them to behead you and cook you up for his dinner. He wants human flesh for dinner. Pāpayya, I am childless. I will hide you in my pack, show you many lands, and raise you up to manhood. Come, get in my pack, Pāpayya,' said the Jangam.

He took the boy's hand, but Pāpayya wrenched it away and said, 'Lord Jangam, I will never go back on what I am about to say. It is folly on your part to take my hand. You will never make me go back on my word. That Jangam is waiting to eat. My mother is ready to behead, cook, and serve me. It will be meritorious to be served as a curry. Get out! I will never take back these words; I will never agree to what you say!'

The mother and father were great devotees, but the child's devotion was even greater.

'Go then, Little Boy,' he said. Once again he sat in front of the crore of Jangams.

Siriyāla Mangamma prepared a bath for her son, bathed him, and put a mark on his forehead. She burned benzoin, put him in the swinging cradle, and sang cradle-songs and lullabies:

Sleep, sleep Ānanda,[16]
Without being patted.
Sleep, great Ānanda
Rāma-Gōvinda.[17]
Sleep.
'O Father! Pāpayya,
The bogeyman is coming,
Bringing his basket.
If you don't sleep,
He'll put you in it
And take you away.
Sleep.
'O Father, Pāpayya,
Don't cry. Don't cry.
Don't cry. Don't cry,
My silly little man.
If you cry, no one
Will hold you,
So sleep, sleep, sleep.'[18]

These were the lullabies and cradle-songs that the mother sang.

Normally, when his mother bathed him and put him to bed, the boy went straight to sleep and slept soundly. That day he did not fall asleep.

'Father, you always sleep so soundly. Why don't you sleep today? The Jangams have come and it is getting late. Son, won't you sleep?' said the mother.

'Mother! Mangamma, I know what you are trying to do. But there is no difference between a sleeping man and a corpse. It will be the stench of death for the Jangams if I sleep. They will not eat me. Kill me while I am awake and serve me as you have promised,' he said.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, come here,' she said.

She held the child.

'Lord of Breath, tie up this child so that he cannot move his arms or legs.'

Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu held the child's four limbs. He took hold of the boy's head and implanted a golden sword in the earth.

'O Father! O Little Boy! Praise Śiva. Say: Śiva, Mahēśvara, Śivaprasiddha Sāmbaśiva, Hara-Hara, Hara-Hara. Say it! Say it! Say it!' said the father.

The boy looked at his father, struggled, and cried, 'Father, you have nurtured me for seven years!'

As the boy wept, Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu said, 'Wedded Wife, I cannot lay hands on this little boy.'

Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu wept bitterly; he was sorely grieved; pearl-like tears wet his face.

Siriyāla Mangamma said, 'Go on! Get out of here! Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer, I carried this child for nine months in my womb. Can't you carry him for even a few minutes?'

To the boy, she said, 'Father! Śiva! Mahēśvara! Sāmbaśiva! Hara-Hara!'

Again and again she called out to him. Then, grabbing his feet and hands, she carved off his head. Red blood gushed forth in rivers. Taking the head, she hid it in a big pot, thinking that she would be able to see it whenever she wished. She cut up the flesh, put it in kettles, and cooked it for the crore of Jangams and the leprous Jangam.

When she served the meat, the Jangam leper looked at it angrily and said, 'O Woman! Siriyāla Mangamma, I cannot look at your face. You are guilty of the five great sins; you are a traitor to your caste; your deeds are evil.'

'What is it, Father? What is it, Jangam Preceptor?'

'Among vegetables, which is the tastiest?'

'Great Soul, the delicious bitter gourd[19] is the tastiest.'

'Among pulses, which is the tastiest?' he said.

'*Kandi*[20] is the most delicious of the pulses,' she said.

'As far as meat is concerned, which is the most delicious meat curry?' he said.

'The head meat is the choicest and tastiest,' she said.

'O Woman, give me the head meat,' he said.

'Wait, Father! Wait, Jangam Preceptor! Wait, Father! Wait, Great Soul,' she said.

Then taking the head from the big pot, she put it on the fire and cooked it to a turn. She seasoned it with black pepper and spices until it was just right. At last she served the meat curry.

The leprous Jangam said, 'O Woman, I have vowed never to eat by myself. And I have never done otherwise. If you have a child, whether it be a son or daughter, bring that child to sit and eat with me. I will not eat by myself,' he said.

'Great Soul! Father! Śankara! Jangam Preceptor, you have given me one and only one son. You asked for a child exactly seven years old, and I cooked his flesh for you. Where am I to get another?' she said.

'I cannot look at your face, Mangamma. You are guilty of the five great sins; you are a traitor to your caste; your deeds are evil. I cannot eat the food that you have prepared,' said the Jangam.

'Please eat, Father.'

'Call your son,' he said.

'Can a dead child come? He won't come. I used to have a son. If he were still here, he would come running. If he were still here, I would call him. But how can I call him now?' thought the mother.

'Come, Siriyāla Pāpayya! Come, Little Son! Come for milk, Golden Vessel! I will give you butter, Father. I will serve you butter in a silver dish. I will serve you milk in a golden bowl, O Father! Pāpayya, I will give you sugar. Come running. I will give you grapes. Come to me. I will give you jackfruit. Come running,' she said.

When the mother called, the boy came running.

The leprous Jangam mingled with the crowd of Jangams and said, 'I cannot look at your face. You are guilty of the five sins of the soul; you are a traitor to your caste; your deeds are evil. You set aside your own son. Somewhere you found another boy whom you butchered and served. By your actions, I am guilty of slaying a child. I am guilty of killing a Brāhmaṇ. Why have you done this, Woman? You brought someone else's child and butchered it, but you saved your own son,' said the Jangam.

'Father, unknown to Rāma, Lāva and Kuśa were born to him in the forest. This child, whom you have given, is that kind of a child,' she said.

She implanted a golden sword in the earth before them all.

'Come! Come, my child,' she said and tied him up so that he could not move his limbs.

The boy said, 'Father! Śiva! Mahēśvara! Śivaprasiddha! Sambāśiva! Hara-Hara!'

Again and again Mangamma made him call out. Then she carved off his head and laid it aside. As she did so, the great soul, Śankara, appeared before them. At once, he appeared before them.

Śankara said, 'O Woman! Mangamma! Listen to me, Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu. I am gratified by your devotion. Ask for a boon and I will reward you.'

Īśvara came with conch, bell, mendicant's pouch, banner pole, and his vehicle, Nandi. He was accompanied by Pārvati, who chanted, 'Bhringi, Bhringi, . . ., Nandinām, Nandikēśvaraha.'

Siriyāla Mangamma said, 'Lord! Īśvara, put me, my husband, and my son aboard Nandi and take us to Kailāsa.'

The severed body and head, which were lying apart, came together. The boy leaped to his feet, shining with bravery, and said, 'O Father! Īśvara, never mind what my parents say. You must grant the boon that I ask.'

'Little Boy, I will do as you say. What do you want?' said Īśvara.

'Great Soul, my mother has asked that you transport me, my father, and her to Kailāsa. That is not the way it must be. In the Kali Age Siriyāla Mangamma is the greatest devotee. Cirutoṇḍa Bhaktuḍu has also gratified you with his devotion. If you grant us liberation for our devotion, what will all the Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras say. They are also devotees. They will say, "You granted them liberation for their devotion, but what have you done for us?" That will never do. Bring Nandi into the centre of the city. With your trident, dig up the ground that this city rests upon. Transport the entire city to Kailāsa,' said the little boy.

Episode 3

Aitamma Sends Bāluḍu to Māncāla's House*

Aitamma gives Bāluḍu permission to go to battle. He refuses to visit his wife first. Aitamma goes to visit Māncāla's mother. Aitamma is shamed. Māncāla agrees to see her husband. Māncāla's dream. Aitamma prepares a meal for the boys. Bāluḍu rejects caste distinctions. Aitamma sends her son to Māncāla.

Aitamma grants Bāluḍu permission to go to Kāryamapūḍi, to fight a terrible battle with Nalagāma Rāju's forces, to kill Narasinga Rāju, and to die on the battlefield. But first he must take leave of his wife, Māncāla.

Bāluḍu protests that he knows nothing of his wife. They were married, like two ceremonial idols, when he was only seven and she was only six. At that time she was too shy and modest even to raise her head. Since that time they have never seen each other. Furthermore, Bāluḍu is ashamed to go to his wife's house because of his relationship with the courtesan, Sabbai. He offers to go and see Sabbai instead.

Aitamma assures her son that that will never do. Sabbai is a woman of pleasure, but Māncāla is a virtuous, wedded wife. She insists that he go to see Māncāla. But Bāluḍu assures her that nothing she can say will persuade him to go to see his wife.

Unable to persuade Bālacandruḍu to visit his wife, Aitamma sets out with her sisters-in-law, the wives of Brahma Nāyuḍu's brothers. When they arrive at Māncāla's mother's house, she receives them and inquires why they have come after being absent for all the feasts and holy days. Aitamma tells Rēkhamma that she has had a dream that she would like to have interpreted by Māncāla. Rēkhamma tells her to go

*Detailed summary.

to the house of her daughter-in-law, Sabbai, the courtesan. Aitamma is very embarrassed.

Rēkhamma relents and agees that Māncāla is the one person who will be able to explain Aitamma's dream. Then Aitamma sends her maidservants to Māncāla's house, instructing them to report the kind of treatment she is receiving. The maidservants run to Māncāla's house and ask her to come and meet her mother-in-law.

Māncāla is filled with sorrow and anger. She wonders if she really even has a mother-in-law. But catching herself, she realizes that nothing is to be gained from scolding her mother-in-law. She decides to go to meet Aitamma. The maidservants prepare her bath, bathe her, oil her hair, and adorn her with the finest clothing and jewellery.

When Aitamma sees Māncāla, she is struck by her beauty. Every part of her body and her every movement are reminiscent of some beautiful aspect of the world of nature: her feet are like lotus petals, her legs like elephant's tusks, her teeth like pomegranate seeds, her hair like swarms of black bees, her glance like a tiger stalking cattle.

Māncāla bows to her mother. The she turns angrily to her mother-in-law and asks if she has come to see her lot. Māncāla says that she would have been better off had she been born as a tree in the wilderness, a bird, a beast, or a lifeless slab of stone, rather than a woman. Finally realizing that this will not gain her anything, she asks Aitamma why she has come.

Aitamma tells Māncāla of Bāluḍu's desire to go to Kāryamapūḍi. She asks her daughter-in-law to receive him and to do all she can to keep him away from the battlefield. Māncāla agrees to see her husband, but she doubts that he will soon forget the courtesan, Sabbai.

Aitamma asks Māncāla if she will be willing to interpret her dream, but Māncāla angrily advises Aitamma to go to Sabbai. Aitamma insists that Bāluḍu has forgotten Sabbai, but Māncāla does not believe it. She tells of a humiliating experience that happened a few days earlier. Having seen Bāluḍu and his brothers going by with a pack train of mangoes, bananas, rice, areca nut, gold, and goats, she had sent her maidservants to assess a toll on the goods.[21] When she found out where they were going and got a report on the quantity of the goods, Māncāla felt humiliated.

But, putting this aside, Māncāla asks to hear the dream. The dream is full of ominous portents for the future: flies flying into flames, water boiling, shadows at the time of childbirth, fruit trees with withering fruit.

Māncāla swoons when she hears the dream. But when she regains consciousness she explains the meaning. The dream foretells Bālacan-

druḍu's death after he slays Narasinga Rāju. It predicts that Peddanna will die near Cintapalli. It also reveals that Kannama will be ambushed, and that the Heroes and warriors will die like flies.

Māncāla asks Aitamma to send Bāluḍu to her.

At home, Aitamma prepares a meal for the boys with her own hands. She sets plates for the boys: an earthen plate for the potter, a great bordered plate for the washerman, a copper plate for the barber, a bronze plate for the blacksmith, a silver plate for the Velama, a leaf plate for the Brāhmaṇ, and a gold plate for her own son, Bāluḍu.

Noting the caste distinctions that his mother has made, Bāluḍu reminds her and his brothers that though different castes have their different dispositions, they are going to war, and caste must be laid aside. The Brāhmaṇ heroically gives his plate to Bāluḍu. The others follow suit, and they all eat together.

Distressed, Aitamma reproaches her son for destroying castes and making them all one. She is especially disturbed by what he has done to the Velama caste. Bāluḍu responds by smashing the blacksmith boy's bronze plate against a pillar and asking his mother to distinguish between the two pieces. When Aitamma asks for an explanation, Bāluḍu tells her what will happen in the battle and how he will die. He curses her to be barren after his death on the battlefield.

Aitamma instructs Bāluḍu to go and get his wife's blessings. She warns him that without a wife's blessing there is no hope of heaven. Giving him *tāmbūlam*, she tells him to spend the night with his wife before proceeding to Kāryamapūḍi.

The boys take leave of Aitamma and set out. Bāluḍu rides in a golden palanquin with a silk parasol. His brothers are mounted on horses. In full battle dress, they pass through the city and come to the *jammi* tree, where they halt.

Episode 4

Bāluḍu Visits the Courtesan

Anapōtu Rāju advises Bāluḍu to visit the courtesan. Sabbai refuses to see him. Her mother tells her to get what she can and brings Bāluḍu to her. The two engage in dalliance. Māncāla's pet parrots report what is going on. Bāluḍu gives everything to Sabbai.

Bāluḍu halted his palanquin at the junction where three paths lay before them.

'Listen, Younger Brothers! Younger Brothers, you are greater

Heroes that I. Three paths lie before us, which path shall we take? What do you say, Younger Brothers?' said Bāluḍu.

Velamala Doranna said, 'We must do as our mother told us when we were at her house. Our mother said we should go and visit our elder brother's wife, spend the night, and go on to Kāryamapūḍi after taking leave of her.'

Bāluḍu waited for a few minutes and then said, 'Younger Brother! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa![22] Anapōtu Rāju, you have mastered the knowledge of Vēdas, Śāstras, and Purāṇas.[23] You have also seen the mysteries of the supreme Brahma.[24] Tell me what we should do. Velamala Doranna has said what he thinks we should do. Now tell me which way you think we should go.'

'Elder Brother, I will tell you what to do. Listen carefully. As far as your wedded wife is concerned, you haven't thought about her for a minute, one way or the other. Now about the courtesan, the woman of pleasure, you have spent the last six months uninterruptedly with her. First we will go to Sabbai's house and take leave of her. Next we will go to your wife's house and take leave of her. After that we will depart for Kāryamapūḍi.'

When Bāluḍu heard this advice, he laughed aloud and said, 'O Younger Brother! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, go and inform Sabbai of our plans and announce our arrival.'

Dēva-Brāhmaṇa went to inform Sabbai, but she had already heard the news.

She thought, 'O Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadīśvara! Hara Hara! Sambāśiva, Bālaḍu and I are friends. Bāluḍu is on his way to Kāryamapūḍi. He will come and ask me to accompany him. I will have to go. But a man who goes to war is a loss to me.

Sabbai devised a plan and made preparations. She took a few onions, skinned them, and rubbed them on some silk. This she wrapped around her head. She put on a soiled, messy sari. Taking the pot of coals, she climbed the stairs to her upper room and lay on the bed.

Calling her maidservants, Sabbai said, 'Speak like this: Brother-in-law! Worthy Brāhmaṇ, for the past three days our elder sister has had a headache. We have given her medicine, but there has been no improvement. The flaming pain still rages. She is neither going out nor accepting visitors.'

When the Brāhmaṇ called, the maidservants spoke as they had been told to do.

Then Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, Anapōtu Rāju said, 'O Maidservants, do you know the style in which Bāluḍu is going to Kāryamapūḍi. He was

different in the past. He is twice as beautiful this time. He is wearing priceless jewels and the finest raiment. Tell her, O Maidservants. Tell her what I have said.'

After delivering this message, Dēva-Brāhmaṇa went and said, 'Elder Brother, this is the way it is with Sabbai. Mount your palanquin and let's go.'

Then Bāluḍu resolved to go to Māncāla's house and prepared to set out.

Meanwhile, Sabbai's mother, Bollasāni, learned what had happened. She went to her daughter and said, 'O Daughter! Dear Sabbai, you have held the hand of a wealthy man, but what have you acquired? In my time I was young and beautiful. The Rājus of the fifty-six nations praised me as the most charming and beautiful of all. Coming to my house, they used to say, "O Bollasāni, ask whatsoever you desire, and it will be given." I . . . By this method I amassed seven heaps of riches. Sabbai, you have held the hand of a wealthy man, but what have you acquired? Bathe and dress yourself in the finest style. I will bring Bāluḍu.'

Now, Bollasāni had a friend who was a merchant-moneylender. His name was Pōli Śeṭṭi.[25] She went to him and said, 'O Father! Sir Śeṭṭi, do you remember the way we got along in our youth?'

The merchant-moneylender laughed. 'What is it that you want, Bollasāni? Ask what you will,' he said.

'It's really nothing, Father. I just need a few peppercorns.'

He gave her the black pepper. She mixed it with sandalwood paste and rubbed it together in her hands.

Then she went to Bāluḍu's palanquin and said, 'O Son-in-law! Bāluḍu! Husband of the World, I put my trust in you, but you are not to be trusted. You and my daughter are friends, but now, when she is ill, you are going away.' As she spoke, she held the sandalwood paste close to her eyes. Tears fell as if she were crying.

'Let's go. Let's go to Sabbai's house,' said Bāluḍu.

When they arrived, Sabbai had already changed her clothes. She had put on fresh clean clothing. Dressed as a courtesan, she went out to meet Bāluḍu. She took his right hand and led him inside where a wooden bedstead was prepared for him. On the wooden bedstead she spread a mattress; on the mattress she spread a jewelled cover; on the jewelled cover she spread a swansdown quilt. She seated Bāluḍu.

Then the courtesan, the woman of pleasure, sat beside Bāluḍu. Their thighs rested one against the other. Their shoulders touched together. She began to put bits of *tāmbūlam* into his mouth. He chewed them and gave them back to her. She put a mirror before their

faces. She opened her mouth and touched his tongue with hers. They both laughed.

Meanwhile, Māncāla, his wife, sat on her roof top, watching and waiting.

'What do you suppose has happened? Yesterday my mother-in-law came and informed me that my husband would be coming. I have been watching all day, but he has not come. He must have gone to Sabbai's house,' said Māncāla.

Māncāla had five pet parrots which she had named. Their names were Hariya, Draupadi, Sirita, Tāra, and Mandodista.

'Women, Hariya and Draupadi, your brother-in-law has gone to Sabbai's house. Go and see what he and Sabbai are doing,' said Māncāla.

The parrots went and looked in to see what was happening. They were sitting, holding hands with their thighs resting on each other, and they were chewing *tāmbūlam*. Between them was a mirror in which they were watching their reflections and laughing. Sabbai and Bāluḍu continued doing the same things as long as the birds watched. At last the parrots rose up into the air, flew back to Māncāla, and reported what they had seen.

Māncāla called a Viśvabrāhmaṇ [goldsmith]. She gave him fine coloured gold and asked him to make two images, one in the likeness of Bāluḍu and the other in the likeness of Sabbai.

That night, Bāluḍu remained with Sabbai. He gave her clothing and ornaments; he gave her sapphires; he gave her priceless jewels; he gave her garments; he gave her everything. When he emerged from her house, he was like a mango tree that had been plundered of its fruit. He was like a serpent without its fangs. He was like blighted millet. His turban was askew.

'O Younger Brother! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, do you remember my uncle, Pēr Nīḍu, who raised us? Go to Pēr Nīḍu's house and tell him that I have sent you for my clothing and jewellery,' said Bāluḍu.

Episode 5

Bāluḍu Meets His Wife

Bāluḍu and his brothers camp in Māncāla's jasmine bower. She prepares to receive them. They are greeted as they mount the stairs. Māncāla asks her mother's advice. Bāluḍu becomes dizzy with love. Māncāla mistakes the Brāhmaṇ for her husband. Bāluḍu asks him for

an explanation. Māncāla curses Anapōtu Rāju. Bāluḍu decides to spend the night with Māncāla. Anapōtu Rāju protests. Bāluḍu promises to rejoin his brothers in the morning.

The younger brother went, as he had been told, and returned with the clothing and jewels. Taking the things, Bāluḍu proceeded to Māncāla's seven-storeyed house. At Māncāla's house, in the jasmine bower, Bāluḍu and his brothers spread blankets and pillows, and sat down. When they were seated, they began to play dice.

Anapōtu Rāju saw the gardener and said, 'O Gardener!'

'What is it, Great Soul?'

'Do you know who it is that has come? It is Bālacandruḍu, the husband of your elder sister, Māncāla. He has come to see your elder sister. Bring him some bouquets, garlands, and bunches of flowers.'

The gardener brought the flowers, and Bāluḍu and his younger brothers were very pleased.

Meanwhile, Māncāla was waiting on her roof. She said, 'Come along, Maidservants. Come Valabhadri, Kāveri, and Padmākṣi. Come Srīdēvi and Bhūdēvi. Girls! Maidservants, yesterday morning my mother-in-law came and told me that my husband was coming. Go, now, and see if he has arrived. Go, see if he is there and let me know.'

The maidservants looked out from Māncāla's roof. Bāluḍu and his brothers, seven in all, were sitting in the jasmine bower. All seven of them born out of one fruit. They were all born on the same day. They were all born under the same stars. All seven of them were alike in form, beauty, grace, and perfection. Māncāla could not tell them apart. This was the reason. She was married when she was six years old; she was only a baby; she knew nothing of what was happening. From that time on, she had never seen her husband. He had never come to visit her.

Seeing that all seven of them were alike in form, beauty, and grace, she was unable to distinguish which was her husband. She said, 'Girls! Maidservants, there are seven. Among them, which one is my husband?'

The maidservants said, 'On the right are three friends. On the left stand three sons-in-law. See there! See the one on the lion throne, under the umbrella. The one who sits there is the lord of your life.

'In the palanquin is the son of your father-in-law, Brahma Nāyuḍu. He was born under an inauspicious star. Kannama stopped in the forest; there he was met by Pēr Nīḍu. Pēr Nīḍu took the child to his house, hid him, and brought him up according to *dharma*. Look! Look there!

'Elder Sister! Māncāla, on his right side is Māripati. On his left is

Velamala Doranna. There sits Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, Anapōtu Rāju. See your husband. He smiles a rare smile; he wears the garland of Cennuḍu; he wears the signet-ring of Lord Rāma. Your husband sits in the centre wearing the signet-ring on his finger. He is your husband, our brother-in-law. He is perfection. What more can be said? He is like Manmatha and Adiśēṣa. Madanō manmathō maraḥ pradymnō mīnakētanaḥ kandarpō darpakō anangaḥ kamaḥ pancasharaḥ smaraḥ itymaraḥ. Which means: Māncāla, our Bāluḍu is more beautiful than the God of love.'[26]

Hearing how the maidservants praised her husband, Māncāla went joyfully into her seven-storeyed house.

'Girls! Maidservants, decorate the house,' she said.

The maidservants did as Māncāla said and decorated all the house. They spread sandalwood paste on the walls, covering them with leaves so that they were hidden from view. They set up subtly painted screens depicting tales of Rāma and tales of Kriṣṇa. Everything was prepared and in perfect order.

The sun rose, and the first rays struck the house. The light was reflected back on Bāluḍu and his younger brothers. The jasmine bower, in which Bāluḍu and his brothers sat, was bathed in radiant green light. Bāluḍu was amazed.

'What marvel is this, Younger Brothers? Everything, including the grove and ourselves, is gleaming with green light. What does it mean?' said Bāluḍu.

They laughed and said, 'Elder Brother, don't you know what it is? Listen carefully and we will tell you. The builder of our elder brother's house was Viśvabrahma. In the construction, he used an elephant of emerald and a horse of sapphire[27] which he inlaid in the walls. It is now sunrise, and the morning rays of the sun are striking the house. We are bathed in the reflection.'

'I am very pleased. I like it very much. Get up, Younger Brothers,' said Bāluḍu.

They mounted the first flight of stairs. Bāluḍu and his younger brothers climbed the second flight of stairs. Māncāla saw them as they approached the third flight.

'O Girls! Maidservants, I have prepared three syringes and seven pots of fine sandalwood water. Sprinkle the sandalwood water on your brother-in-law,' she said.

The maidservants rained sandalwood water on Bāluḍu and his brothers, squirting it with syringes. The boys were completely enveloped in sweet perfume.

Bāluḍu turned and said, 'What does this mean, Younger Brothers?'

Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Īśvara are applauding our approach to your wife's house. They have caused a rain of sandalwood water to fall upon us. Let's go on,' said the brothers.

They rose up and climbed one more flight of stairs. As they mounted the stairs (I told you about the parrots that Māncāla had raised), the parrots were waiting for them.

'Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop!' said the parrots.

'What does this mean, Younger Brothers? Who is saying "Stop! Stop!"?' said Bāluḍu.

'Elder Brother, don't you know what is happening?'

'No, I do not! What is happening?'

'Our Sister-in-law has raised five parrots and taught them to speak. It is these parrots who are accosting us,' said the younger brothers.

'How can that be? Parrots and peacocks are found in the forest. These are birds like those. And yet they are accosting us. The mistress of these birds must have sent them. I am disgraced and overcome with shame. Let us return to our house.'

'Elder Brother, listen to what I have to say.'

'What is that?'

'Who do these birds belong to? They are our sister-in-law's birds. If they are our sister-in-law's birds, are they not your birds as well? If they are your own birds, why should you feel ashamed or disgraced? Let's go on.'

They came to the sixth flight of stairs and Māncāla said, 'Women! Maidservants, I have prepared three syringes and seven pots of tumeric water. Pull the cord on the revolving door.'

When the maidservants pulled the cord on the revolving door, it spun round and round and round, and blocked the entrance. With the three syringes they rained the seven pots of tumeric water on Bāluḍu and his younger brothers. It was like the downpour of *citta* and *svāti*[28] combined. Unable to bear the force of the downpour of tumeric water, Bāluḍu and his brothers fell into a heap, one on top of the other.

'Cennayya of Mācerla! Patron God! Cennayya of Ayodhya! Protector of our Souls! Cennayya of Kāceli! Embodiment of Mercy! Cennayya of Pālamācāpuri! Auspicious Syllable! Cennayya of Mācerla! Our Patron Deity!' they cried out.

Their garments were soaking wet. Māncāla looked at them and marvelled.

'O Girls! Maidservants, your brothers-in-law's clothes are wet. Remove their wet things and give them dry ones. Spread fine golden mats on the floor and provide them with dice to play. Maidservants, . . .' said Māncāla.

The maidservants did as Māncāla bade them. They removed the wet clothing and dressed the boys in dry clothing. They spread fine golden mats and laid out the dice. Then they returned to Māncāla.

The brothers began to play dice.

Meanwhile, Māncāla took some of her maidservants with her and went to her mother's seven-storeyed house.

Her mother said, 'For a long, long time your husband never came to your house. Now, when he has finally come, why have you left him and come to me? Tell me why you have come.'

'Mother, listen. I will tell you. My husband and his brothers are all equal in form, beauty, grace, and perfection. I have come to you because I cannot distinguish which of them is my husband. You are my elder, and I have come to ask you what to do,' said Māncāla.

'So that is your problem. I will tell you what to do. Go home, bathe, and don fine raiment and precious jewels. Take a basin and a vessel of water, and go to your husband. When you get there, they will all be seated. Your brothers-in-law will see you. Realizing that an elder brother's wife is equal to a mother, they will feel it wrong to remain seated. The six of them will rise quickly to their feet. The one who remains seated will be the lord of your breath.'

Māncāla took leave of her mother and returned to her seven-storeyed house. She bathed and put on dry clothing. She took a basin and a vessel of water. With her maidservants in attendance, she went to her husband.

Bāluḍu saw her coming. Seeing his wife, he became dizzy with love. He was totally distracted and knew nothing of what was happening. He did not even now that his wife was coming. While Bāluḍu was in this state, Māncāla came and looked at the seven. All seven of them were born on the same lunar day, under the same stars, on the same day of the week. Because they were also born of the same fruit, they were alike in form, grace, beauty, and perfection.

But the Brāhmaṇ was more lustrous than Bāluḍu. He was like a beard of rice in the husk. Secondly, the five younger brothers rose to their feet. But the Brāhmaṇ thought, 'I am a a Brāhmaṇ and they are Velamas. If I rise, my brother's wife will be the sinner. I must remain seated.' Being knowledgeable in sacred lore, he sat beside Bāluḍu without getting up.

Seeing this, Māncāla thought, 'What am I to do now? When I went to my mother's house, she told me that one would remain seated and the other six would rise. Now I come here and find two of them seated. Which of them is my husband?'

She waited for a minute. Then, looking carefully, she noted the

lustre of the Brāhmaṇ, who was like beards of rice. Thinking him to be her husband, Māncāla approached and took the Brāhmaṇ's feet. As she did so, the Dēva-Brāhmaṇa's heart broke, and he fell to the earth. Recovering from his swoon, he quickly rose up.

'O Sister-in-law, I am a Dēva-Brāhmaṇa. My name is Anapōtu Rāju.'

The Dēva-Brāhmaṇa wept many tears. His right eye cried a torrent of tears, his waist bent, and he fell to the ground. His left eye shed a river of tears. Seeing the girl's face, the Dēva-Brāhmaṇa wept like a girl.

As the Brāhmaṇ wept, Māncāla proceeded to wash his feet.

'Look there! There is my elder brother,' he said.

'Māncāla went to her husband and placed his right foot in a golden basin. She washed just one foot. The Dēva-Brāhmaṇa saw what she did and wondered.

'Sister-in-law, what are you doing? You are washing only one of my elder brother's feet. Wash the other foot as well,' said Anapōtu Rāju.

Then Māncāla said, 'O Brother-in-law! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, why do you ask? You have mastered all learning and all the sacred books. You have read the Vēdas, my silly brother-in-law. O Brother-in-law! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, why do you ask? One soiled foot is my portion. The second foot? That foot belongs to my co-wife, Sabbai, the courtesan. I have washed the foot that is my share.'

'Why do you talk like that, Sister-in-law? Sabbai is a courtesan, a woman of pleasure. You are a wedded wife. It is not right for you to behave in this fashion. Go ahead and wash my elder brother's second foot as well,' said Anapōtu Rāju.

Then Māncāla went to her husband and placed his foot in the golden basin. When she had finished washing, she took the water and sprinkled it over her head.[29]

When she had finished, she prayed, 'Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sāmbaśiva! Swāmi! Cennakēśvarasvāmi! Mother! Ankāladēvi! Mother, I must see the full form, beauty, grace, and perfection of my husband. I must have a full look at him.'

Behind Māncāla was the glass pillar. She retired behind the pillar and remained there.

When Bāluḍu saw his wife, he was dizzy with love and totally distracted. Māncāla's arrival, her washing the Brāhmaṇ's feet, her touching the Brāhmaṇ's feet, her washing his one foot, the Brāhmaṇ's words to her, and her washing his other foot, all these went unnoticed by Bāluḍu. The reason was this: overcome with love-dizziness upon seeing his wife, he knew nothing of what had happened. As soon as his

wife went behind the glass pillar, the dizziness passed. Bāluḍu was astonished.

'O Younger Brother! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, what does this mean? Three hundred and sixty-five days a year you go about the city asking for alms. One day I said, "O Younger Brother! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, is your sister-in-law beautiful?" That is what I asked. Did I not? I did indeed! And what did you tell me? You said, "O Elder Brother, if you ask me, it is hard to say. My sister-in-law's beauty is like rocks that goats tread upon. She has . . ., skinny arms, a corpselike face, . . ., spindly legs, a wart on her chin, a moustache, and nasal hair. There is certainly nothing about her that would make you want to leave the courtesan, Sabbai. Furthermore, she is pop-eyed, flap-eared, and big-bellied." Isn't that what you told me? O Younger Brother! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, what is the meaning of this? Who, then, is this exquisite maiden of matchless beauty? She is not from the human world, the serpent world, or the world of the Gods. She is from the world of the Gods.[30] Is she a celestial gem or a celestial pearl? Who is this girl of matchless beauty?' asked Bālacandruḍu.

When he heard these words, the Brāhmaṇ's heart violently broke.

'Elder Brother, I deceived you. It was a falsehood as big as a mountain,' he said.

'Forget it, Younger Brother. Never mind. What stratagem is without its falsehood? Never mind. Whatever be the reason, the dictates of Brahma cannot be avoided,' said Bāluḍu.

Māncāla thought, 'Huh, huh! What is this! My husband is not responsible for this crime. He has committed no sin. It is this Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, Anapōtu Rāju, who has kept me and my husband apart. O Brother-in-law! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, you have kept me and my husband, your elder brother, apart. I suppose you are happy about that. But you will never live to enjoy your happiness. On the way to Kāryamapūḍi is a *jammi* tree. Do you know the place? It is by the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees where you and your elder brother played happily together. At that tree, at seven in the morning, on your way to Kāryamapūḍi, your fate awaits you. You kept me and your elder brother apart. Look here! As you kept us apart, so will I keep you apart. You were born on the same day, your ceremonial uncleanliness was on the same day, you were raised together, and you were married together. You first mounted horses together, buckled on arms together, and entered the court together.[31] You were born on the same lunar day, of the same fruit, under one star, on the same day. Now, as you came between me and your elder brother, so am I coming between

you and your elder brother. If you do not fall as a lone hero by the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees, my name is not Māncāla.' This was the vow that the maiden, Māncāla, swore in her heart.

In her heart was Hari's noose;[32] in her mind was poisoned rice. Māncāla left the hall.

Bāluḍu said, 'O Younger Brothers, go to the gaming place. Pitch your tents and stay there. I will remain here for four watches of the night. I will stay in your sister-in-law's house tonight. Then I will rejoin you.'

At these words Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, Anapōtu Rāju, flamed up, violently angry. He laughed and said, 'Elder Brother, Bālacandra, now that you have seen your wife, you are transported with desire. Elder Brother, if you are overcome with desire, you stay here. Your virginal battle will be mine. I will fight both your virginal battle and my own. I will fight for both of us. If you desire your wife, stay here! Hey! I will decapitate Narasinga Rāja. I'll take his head along with the veins and muscles. I am resolved to take revenge for the sake of my father-in-law, Komma Rāju. I will vindicate caste and family. Only when all that is accomplished will I return.' Thus spoke the Dēva-Brāhmaṇa.

Bālacandruḍu laughed aloud at his younger brother's words and said, 'O Younger Brother! Dēva-Brāhmaṇa! Anapōtu Rāju, why do you talk like that? I am not infatuated with my wife. I fully intend to take revenge for his caste. I have it firmly fixed in my heart not to use my weapon. Instead I will pull off Narasinga Rāju's head along with its veins and muscles. The vindication of his caste is in my mind. Vengeance is smouldering in my heart. Never mind! If you want me to spend the night in your sister-in-law's house, I will do it. If not, we will go. Let's go!'

As he spoke, Bāluḍu rose up, shining with heroism. But the Brāhmaṇ blocked his path.

'Stand where you are! I am only saying what has to be said. All right, you remain here in my sister-in-law's house for the four watches of the night. I will go ahead. We six brothers, and the soldiers, will have our tents pitched by the gaming place and remain there. When the morning star rises, we will beat the war drum for the first time. You must come and join us, Elder Brother. When the second star rises, we will again beat the war drum. You must come and join us,' said Anapōtu Rāju.

Bāluḍu agreed to do as his younger brother said. Anapōtu Rāju, the soldiers, and the younger brothers went to the gaming place and pitched their tents. They pitched tents of silver silk; they pitched tents of gold silk. For shade they pitched blue silk tents; for sleeping

they pitched . . . tents. After the tents were pitched, they remained there.

Episode 6

Heroes of the Past*

The murals of Rāma and Kriṣṇa. The images of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahma, and their consorts. Bāluḍu is embarrassed by the images of himself and Sabbai. Māncāla's mother instructs her what to do.

Māncāla's maidservants prepare a bed for Bāluḍu in the bedroom. Bāluḍu goes to bed, but each time he puts a leg on to the bed, it begins to spin round. When he pulls back his leg, the bed stops revolving. Realizing that it must possess some secret power, Bāluḍu makes a heroic leap and lands in the middle of the bed. Eight figures rise up, two in each of the four directions.

Lying on the bed, Bāluḍu looks at the walls. On the walls are murals depicting stories of Rāma and stories of Kriṣṇa. On the ceiling are depicted the five poems from the four ages. In the Krita Age is the battle between the Gods and Demons with Īśvara fighting the Rakṣasas. Bāluḍu's rage and heroism are aroused when he sees the battle between the thirty-three crores of Gods and the sixty-six crores of Demons. He calls on Īśvara to reveal when he will fight such a battle. After some time, he realizes that what he is seeing is only a mural.

In the Trēta Age is depicted the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa abducts Sīta; and Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva, Ānjanēya, and the host of monkeys attack Lanka which is defended by Rāvaṇa, his brothers, and the Rakṣasas. Again Bāluḍu's wrath is aroused. Then he realizes that it too is only a mural.

In the Dvāpara Age is the battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. In this mural are all the great heroes of the *Mahābhārata* war. Bāluḍu's wrath is kindled. He wonders when he will fight such a battle. He vacillates between wrath and tranquillity.

Māncāla sends her maidservants to find out what Bāluḍu is doing. The maidservants report what has happened. Then Māncāla instructs them to prepare three images. The first is Brahma and Sarasvati on the gander. They are accompanied by ten Brāhmaṇs reciting the Vēdas. The bed shakes and Bāluḍu gets up, stands beside it, and praises Brahma. The images retire to a corner.

Viṣṇu comes riding on Garuḍa. He is accompanied by Lakṣmi, the

*Detailed summary.

ten avatars, and the devotees. Bāluḍu is amazed to see them and thinks they have come to take him away. He calls on Īśvara, Cennakēśvarasvāmi, and Ankālamma, telling them that he is going to fight with Narsinga Rāju. He praises Viṣṇu and the images retire to another corner.

Śankara and Pārvati ride up to the bed on Nandi. The lord of Kailāsa is accompanied by the sounds of conch and bell. Bāluḍu laughs and assures Śankara that he worships him. Śankara retires, and Bāluḍu covers himself with a silk blanket.

Māncāla, again, sends her maidservants to see what Bāluḍu is doing. Seeing his reaction to the appearance of the images, the maidservants ask Bāluḍu what he is doing. Bāluḍu explains that he has stood up to receive Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Īśvara. The maidservants tell him that he is crazy and suggest that his craziness might be from spending too much time with the courtesan.

Bāluḍu notices the last pair of figures and asks about them. They are the ones that Māncāla had made according to the report given by the parrots. Bāluḍu is delighted when he sees the figures, but he does not recognize himself. He asks the maidservants to identify them. Māncāla hurries in and asks why he fails to recognize himself and Sabbai. Bāluḍu is very embarrassed. He covers himself with a sheet and goes to sleep.

Māncāla goes to her mother's house and tells her what has happened. She asks her mother how to deal with her husband's sexual advances. Her mother, Rēkhamma, advises her what to do. She must not have intercourse with Bāluḍu. In the morning, he will leave for Kāryamapūḍi, and the next day he will die. If Māncāla and her husband engage in intercourse, there will be no pathway to heaven. If they refrain, Bāluḍu will go to Kāryamapūḍi, fight, and die. After the battle is over, Brahma Nāyuḍu and Akka Pinakka will raise up all the slain Heroes and warriors. They will then enter Guṭṭikoṇḍa cave where they are destined to live ever after. The mother adjures her daughter to refrain from intercourse. Māncāla grieves for her lot as a woman.

Māncāla's mother tells her daughter to check on her sleeping husband. Māncāla carefully draws back the covers and takes her husband's right hand. Bāluḍu is in the middle of a dream in which the war drums are beating. He is on the battlefield decapitating Narasinga Rāju and avenging Ala Rācamallu's death. His thoughts are not on his wife but on the approaching battle. He shows no desire for his wife. Māncāla reports to her mother who sends her back to her own house.

Episode 7

The Conversation Between Bāluḍu and Māncāla

Māncāla resists Bāluḍu's advances. The broken necklace and the search for the pearl. Māncāla serves him empty fruit. Bāluḍu leaves his food untouched. Māncāla purifies it for him to take to the battle. They visit the house in the well. Bāluḍu's brothers call him to battle by sounding the war drum. Māncāla tells her husband to send Anapōtu Rāju to her. The boys depart for battle.

Māncāla thought, 'My husband is sleeping. I want to see him in his fullness: his form, grace, beauty, and perfection. But I must be careful not to start a quarrel between the two of us.'

She took rosewater in her hands and began to massage her husband's feet. When the cool rosewater touched his feet, the lotus-eyed Bāluḍu awoke. He rose up, shining with heroism. Seeing his wife, he was dizzy with desire, reached out, and grabbed her.

Māncāla said, 'O Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sāmbaśiva, I know not what to do.'

No sooner had she uttered these words than she had an idea. This was the idea. Taking the golden clasp in her hand, she jerked off her necklace, breaking the thread. The pearls poured on to the floor. 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life!' She wept and cried many grievous tears. Pearl-like tears soaked her face; her waist bent; she fell to the earth. She cried aloud and carried on.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, you have not come because you wanted to see me. I know why you have come. You have come on an errand for the courtesan, Sabbai. She told you to come and get my pearl necklace. Lord of Breath, that is why you have come,' said Māncāla.

'O Wedded Wife, I neither saw it nor broke it. Either your hand or mine must have touched it while we were struggling. Bring me a silk thread and I will make a necklace better than what you had before. I will string the pearls,' said Bāluḍu.

Māncāla went into the house and found a piece of silk thread.

'Īśvara! Paramēśvara, if I give this thread to my husband, he will find the lost pearls and restore the necklace. He will put the string around my neck and my strategy will come to nought. What shall I do?' she thought.

The girl was at a loss for a solution. After puzzling for a while, the maiden, Māncāla, went to her husband.

Torches were lit in the house, and Bāluḍu searched for the lost pearls. When he found them, he put them in a pot and began stringing.

When Bāluḍu had strung ten pearls, Māncāla said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life, you have strung ten pearls. If you go on stringing by yourself, it will take you a very long time to string them all. I shall sit down and string from the other end.'

'Sit down! Sit down, Wedded Wife,' said Bāluḍu.

Māncāla took one end, Bāluḍu took the other, and they began to string. As Bāluḍu strung ten pearls, Māncāla removed five and returned them to the bowl. The string was not completed. Bāluḍu noticed what was happening. He was stringing pearls and his wife was unstringing them.

'O Wedded Wife, don't you want it? Or are the women of the harem angry?'[33] he thought. He lifted his head, looked at the sky, and laughed outright.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life, stop it! Why are you laughing? What is so funny up there in the sky? If there is nothing strange in the sky, have you perchance thought of someone more beautiful than I? Or did you happen to remember the courtesan, Sabbai? Tell me why you are laughing. I am going to stop stringing and you also must stop. Stop!'

Bāluḍu said, 'O Wedded Wife, there is no one more beautiful than yourself. Is there anyone in the world more beautiful than you are? There is no one.'

'Īśvara's wife, Pārvati, is my equal, but there is no one else,' she said.

Bāluḍu said, 'Look! Look, Wedded Wife!'

When Bāluḍu told her to look, Māncāla raised her head and looked up. Quickly, Bālacandruḍu bent over and pulled the string out of her hands. He tied knot on top of knot, forming the serpent knot.

'Lord, why did you do that? Why have you taken it?' thought Māncāla, but she did not say it aloud. Bāluḍu did not offer any explanation. They both kept it in their hearts.

Meanwhile, Bāluḍu went on stringing pearls. He strung twenty pearls, and the necklace was nearly complete.

'Oh! Oh! The string is almost strung. He will finish the necklace, put it on my neck, and please me. If that happens, my strategy will come to nought. What shall I do?' thought Māncāla.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, if you string without assistance, the pearls will slide back and forth. They will be broken. May I sit beside you and help?' she said.

'Sit down! Sit down, Wedded Wife,' said Bāluḍu.

Then Māncāla began dividing the pearls into piles. As she did so, she hid the chief pearl in the folds of his garment.

'Even if my husband works for six months, he will never finish the necklace,' she thought.

Bāluḍu did not notice what she had done. He tied the two ends of the string together.

'See here, Wedded Wife. The necklace is as perfect as it was before. Put the strand around your neck and I will be very pleased,' he said.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord,' said Māncāla and laughed, 'There are four watches in the night before the coming of dawn. You are my husband. You have nothing to fear. You can remain here happily with me throughout the night. You need have no fear for property or jewels. Now, I have a question.'

'What is your question, Wedded Wife? Ask it.'

'Greal Soul! Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, what supports the earth?' said Māncāla.

'Wedded Wife, you want to know what supports the earth? Beneath the earth is Ādiśeṣa. Ādiśeṣa supports the earth.'

'Good. If the elders plant a grove of trees, what supports the grove, Lord?'

'You want to know what supports a grove of trees? Whosoever plants a grove of trees must first plant a banyan tree. The banyan is the most excellent of the trees. The banyan tree supports the grove.'

'Good. What you say is true. Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer, suppose the elders—Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras—are having a Śiva temple built. What will support the Śiva temple, Lord?'

'O Wedded Wife, the temple must have a *linga*. A God, a *linga*, must be brought and affixed there. The *linga* will support the temple.'

'That is good, Lord. Suppose a court is assembled. Who supports the assembly? For some reason or other a court is assembled in the assembly hall. Who is the support of the assembly?'

Bāluḍu said, '. . . If an assembly has a priest, a learned Brāhmaṇ, that will be good. . . . The elders say that Rāvi, Sūryuḍu, is the gem of the heavens. . . . As far as a household is concerned, a household must have a child, be it a little girl or a little boy. If there is such a child, it will be like a gem. . . . Suppose there is a bed. Whether the family is poor or great, if that bed has an appropriate woman on it, she will be like a gem. She will be considered a gem. . . . An assembly like that must have a learned man. A learned man will be the support of that assembly. That will be good.'[34]

'Good. Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer, I have one more question.'

'What is that?'

'Who supports a woman like myself?'

'Wedded Wife, the support of a woman like you is a man like me.'

'Good. That is fine. But I have just one more question, Lord of Breath.'

'What is that?'

'What is the support of a necklace like mine?'

'I will tell you, Wedded Wife. Listen carefully. The support of a necklace is the principal gem.'

'Where is it? Do you see it? You have not come because you love me. Sabbai, the courtesan, has asked you to bring my chief pearl for her nosering. That is why you have come, Lord of Breath,' said Māncāla. She shed many grievous tears; her face was soaked with tears like pearls.

As his wife wept, Bāluḍu said, 'Wedded Wife, I have not seen it. Perhaps it broke when we were struggling.'

Lighting torches, they searched the entire house. But no matter where they looked, the pearl was nowhere to be found.

'Wedded Wife, I can't find it anywhere.'

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life, I know it has to be in your possession.'

'I did not see it. By an oath on the feet of Cennuḍu of Śrīgiri[35]-Mācerla, I did not see the chief pearl. By my patron God, Śambhumūrti, and by the feet of my father, Brahma Nāyuḍu, I swear that I never saw that pearl.'

'How can you say that, Lord of Breath, Master of Life, Heart Stealer? Why have you hidden it? You are going to battle and you can bring back many pearls as fine as that one. Stop! Stop, Lord of Breath,' she said.

She calmed herself and said, 'It has to be you who has the chief pearl.'

Then Bālacandruḍu jumped to his feet. He preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened; he gnashed his teeth; his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit. He was fully agitated, a wrathful warrior.

Māncāla laughed and said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life, tranquillity is becoming to a man. Tranquillity is becoming to everyone. Stop it! Stop it! Why do you carry on this way? Great Soul, I am confident that you have the chief pearl. Now stand up and shake out your silk cloak. If you do that, I will be satisfied.'

Bālacandruḍu rose up quickly, took off his silk cloak, and holding it in both hands, he shook it out. As he shook the cloak, it came between himself and Māncāla. He could not see her, and she could not see him. The pearl in the folds of her garment shook loose and rolled on to the floor.

'What is this that I see? Lord of Breath! Master of Life, you said that you had not seen it and you swore that you did not know where it was.'

'I really didn't see it. But never mind. The necklace is now complete and you can please me,' he said.

'Lord of Breath, yesterday morning your mother fed you, but what have you eaten since then?' she said. The she called the keeper of the pantry.

'O Keeper of the Pantry', she called, 'Bring sweet mango, coconut, and vessels.'

The keeper of the pantry did as he was told. Māncāla brought two plates. Taking the fruit, she quickly cut it up. She removed the juicy pith and put it on one plate. The empty fruit she put on another plate. The she put the plate with the empty fruit before her husband. Seeing the fruit, Bāluḍu's mouth watered.

Now Bāluḍu was a great lover of jasmine flowers and flowers of all kinds. But he was even more fond of fruit. Taking a piece of fruit in his hand, he tried to suck the juice out of it. But the fruit was flat and pithless. He laid it aside. A second time he took a piece of fruit and endeavoured to extract the juice. That piece was also pithless.

Bāluḍu thought, 'This is a grove and it is the middle of the night. There are parrots and peacocks about. They live here in this grove. Perhaps the birds have drunk the juice.'

He put the second piece of fruit aside and took a third. But when he tried to get juice out of the third one, it, too, was pithless. Māncāla had removed all the juicy pith, and there was none remaining.

'Juice, Wedded Wife! Bring me juice. There is no juice. Where is the juicy pith?'

Then Māncāla said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, why do you make such an outcry, asking for juice? You went to the courtesan's house and gave her all the juice and pith. You spent the whole day with her and came to me like an empty fruit. Everything you had, you gave to Sabbai. Yesterday morning you set out with gold. That went to Sabbai. Now you make an outcry, asking me what has happened to the pith,' she said.

'Oh, no! I brought this upon myself,' said Bāluḍu. He felt very ashamed. He was downcast and troubled, and he lay down.

Māncāla said, 'Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara!

Sāmbaśiva, if my husband and I are to be together, how can I help it to happen? Can we continue to remain apart like this. Why not let him eat a good meal?'

The woman, Māncāla, brought the plate containing the juicy, pithy pieces of fruit. She set it before her husband. Bāluḍu rose up and looked at the fruit. Being exceedingly hungry, he sucked every bit of juice out of the fruit.

Seeing how hungry he was, Māncāla fell to the earth. She was very sad to see her husband in such a state. 'O Women! Maidservants, my husband is very hungry. Go to the potter's house and bring me a new cooking pot,' she said.

In the pot she put three full measures of rice; she put three pieces of firewood on the fire; she placed three fireplace stones under the pot. When she called on Śambhumūrti, the three measures of rice began to boil and bubble. When the rice was cooked, she tested it to see that it was done and set it aside. On a plate with yellow flowers, she dished up the food.

She made soup, curries, condiments, pickles, legumes, and rice. She made *pānakam*, *junnu*, pickles, and clarified butter. She prepared all of the finest foods. She used excellent fine rice, perfect legumes, dried prepared eggplants, *vaḍiyālu*, *appālu*, creamy curds, *miṭambarālu*, *abbaṭlu*, *bōbaṭlu*, *araselu*, *pūrnālu*, *gārelu*, *būrelu*, and fine *appaḍālu*. The vegetables were choice quality, and the clarified butter was from cows. When Māncāla finished cooking all these fine foods, she served them to her husband.

Bāluḍu rose up quickly and sat down to eat. Overcome with love for his wife, he was distracted by the sight of her. He sat there, neither eating or uttering the sacred words. His hands were motionless, not mixing the food. He began chewing his *tāmbūlam*.[36]

The maidservants saw what he was doing and said, 'Brother-in-law! Bālacandra!'

'What is it, Maidservants?'

'What are you doing, Sir? You are her father's sister's son. She is your mother's elder brother's daughter. You are maternal cross cousins. Why should you be modest or bashful? Call her, Sir. Call your wife to join you,' they said.

Hearing the maidservants' words, Bāluḍu said, 'O Wedded Wife, come and join me. Come, you beautiful doll. We will eat together, charming lady.'

Hearing her husband's call, Māncāla said, 'O Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer, you spend all your time with Sabbai. She is a courtesan, a woman of pleasure. You and Sabbai are in the habit of

sitting in her house and eating together. We cannot do like that. You and Sabbai sit together, eating rice and condiments. Lord of Breath, when you are in the habit of doing that, how can you call and expect me to do the same? Were I to do so, I would be the laughing-stock of the world.'

Bāluḍu was shamed by the words spoken by his wife, Māncāla.

Māncāla thought, 'Now, what can I do with this food? I cannot serve it to anyone else. Not only that, I can't even eat it myself.'

With these thoughts in her mind, Māncāla went outside and poured the meal out on a slab on the ground. She emptied out all the rice, offered cassia and benzoin, and did obeisance. 'Swāmi! Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sāmbaśiva!' she prayed. The food which she had cleaned out of the pots returned to its uncooked state at his command. It was a holy place of the Śīlammas. The rice, once more, became kernels of uncooked grain. Taking the three measures of rice, Māncāla returned it to the pot, put a lid on it and affixed the seal of the Śīlammas.[37]

The maidservants saw what she was doing and said, 'Why are you doing that?'

'My husband is destined to go to Kāryamapūḍi. In Nāyakurālu gap he will meet the Rāju of Bangāla and fight with him. That Rāju is called Bōna Singa Rāju. My husband will decapitate Bangāla Rāju and put his head in a pot over a fire pit. In the pot he will put three measures of rice. In the middle of the battlefield, he will boil the head of Bangāla Rāju. Then, placing the head in a palanquin, all the fifth caste of Palnāḍu will make a procession, saying, "*Poli*! *Pulō*! *Pulō*!"[38] That is what is destined to happen. At that time, my husband will need rice from home. Where will he get it? Maidservants, I have arranged for the rice from home.'

Then Māncāla said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer, I have one question.'

She was watching for the dawn which was still a short time off.

'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer!'

'What is it, Wedded Wife?'

'After waiting for so long to come to my house, now that you are here, what wondrous things have you seen?'

'Why do you ask, Wedded Wife? What wondrous things are there to be seen?'

'My father, your maternal uncle, Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu, had a jasmine grove planted. In the jasmine grove he had a water-well dug.[39] In the well he had a house built. In that house is a wooden bedstead. Come and see it, Lord of Breath.'

Bāluḍu rose up at once, and this is what he did. He bent down and took Māncāla's hand.

His wife, Māncāla, said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life, we do not have the permission of your father, Brahma Nāyaḍu, to touch each other. Look there. There is a pomegranate. Take the pomegranate in your right hand. I will take it in my left hand. We will go like that.'

As she suggested, they held a pomegranate between them. Bāluḍu took it in his right hand and Māncāla took it in her left hand. Together they entered the jasmine grove. In the jasmine grove, they descended into the water-well. Emerging from the well, they entered the house. In the house they spread blankets and pillows on the wooden bedstead and sat down. Between them they placed the pomegranate. Bāluḍu stayed on one side and Māncāla stayed on the other. They sat enjoying the beauty of the jasmine grove.

Suddenly, Bāluḍu heard the sound, 'Gubagubagubaguba Gubā'.

'O Wedded Wife,' he said.

'What is it, Lord?'

'What is that sound that I hear in the well?'

'Lord of Breath, don't you know what it is?'

'I have no idea what it might be,' he said.

'Your maternal uncle, my father, Gaṇḍa Bhīma Nāyuḍu, went hunting in the forest. He caught two white doves, a male and a female. He turned them loose in this well. From their union have come all these doves. The sound you hear is the noise of the doves.'

'O Wedded Wife, call the doves so that I can see what they are like.'

Māncāla called them, saying, 'Come, Mother. Come, Five Sacred Products of the Cow.[40] Come, Young Mango Tree. Come, Lover. Come, Śīlamma, the mother of Nāyuḍu. Come, you daughter of the house of Gaṇḍa. Come, son of the house of Sunkari.'

'As Māncāla called, the doves flew to her. 'Gubagubagubaguba,' they cooed. They alighted, landing round Bāluḍu and Māncāla. The couple enjoyed the beauty of the doves and the sounds they made. Just then, the dawn broke.

At the gaming place were Bāluḍu's younger brothers: the Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, Anapōtu Rāju; and the others. 'O Elder Brother! Bālacandra, the dawn has come. It is time to go to the battle of Kāryamapūḍi.'

They beat the war drum. 'Gubul! Gubul! Gubul!' roared the war drum.

Bāluḍu heard the sound of the drum. To him it was like the sound of the elephant that was grabbed by the crocodile. Viṣṇu's elephant went to the shore to bathe. There it was grabbed by a crocodile. 'In the

water the crocodile does not hesitate to grab an elephant. On the shore it is easily beaten by a dog. The difference is in the power that comes of being in one's own place. Viśvadābhirāma, vinura Vēma.'[41] To Bāluḍu the sound of the drum was like the sound of that elephant trumpeting. Viṣṇu came, slew the crocodile, and saved the elephant. Just as Viṣṇu heard that sound, Bāluḍu heard the sound of the war drum.

'O Wedded Wife, dawn has broken for my brothers at the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees, by the wondrous *rāvi* trees. My younger brothers are calling me. I must go to battle. Give me leave.'

Māncāla looked at him in amazement and said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, you are asking to take leave of me here in this jasmine grove that is like a thick forest. I am a lone woman. You say that you are going to leave me here. What will happen to me if you leave me? Let's go to the house. When we get there, I will give you leave.'

'Let's go,' he said.

Then Bāluḍu and Māncāla took the path to the house. At the house Bāluḍu said, 'Wedded Wife, give me leave to go.'

'I will give you leave, Great Soul. But first I have one request.'

'What is that?'

'You will go to golden Kāryamapūḍi. There you will fight a battle. You will do battle with Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju. You will sacrifice Narasinga Rāju. The first time that you try to decapitate Narasinga Rāju with your sword, you will fail. Again you will attempt it with your weapon and your guts will spill out. When your guts spill out, you must call on Garutmantuḍu. Hearing your prayer, Garutmantuḍu will come and hold them.[42] That is one request. But I have one more request.'

'What is that?'

'It is really nothing. It concerns your little brother, the Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, Anapōtu Rāju. You must send Anapōtu Rāju to me.'

'Why do you say that? Why do you say that, Wedded Wife? Why should I send my younger brother to your house? Tell me why,' he said. 'Why should I send him? We were born on the same day; our ceremonial uncleanliness was on the same day; we were raised together. We first mounted horses together, buckled on arms together, and entered the court together. We went to fencing class together. Now, why do you ask me to send my younger brother? I will never send him as you ask. Why should I send him?' said Bāluḍu.

'O Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, you don't know why you should send him? He is an Agrajanmuḍu,[43] a Brāhmaṇ. If he should die in battle, we would be guilty of the death of a

Brāhmaṇ. The murder of infants, women, Brāhmaṇs, and cattle are the great sins enumerated by the elders. We would be guilty of slaying a Brāhmaṇ. One way or the other, you must send him to my house. I will explain it all to him later,' she said.

As Vēmana said, 'Sweeter than jackfruit, sugar, new honey, or *junnu*; sweeter than the juice of the sugar cane are the words of a maiden. Viśvadābhirāma, vinura Vēma.'[44] In the same way, Bāluḍu fell for the words of a woman and agreed to send his younger brother.

Then Māncāla gave Bāluḍu leave to go. She said, 'Take this *tāmbūlam*. May you have the fierceness in revenge of Aśvatthāman; may you have the steadfastness of Vibīṣana; may you act as befits a son; may you . . . Go safely to Kāryamapūḍi, Lord of Breath. Do battle with the full army of Nalagāma Rāju. Fight against the forces that Nāyakurālu has assembled. There will be elephants, camels, swift horses, and irregulars. You must fight a terrible, terrible battle with them. Sacrifice Narasinga Rāju and cut his throat with your sword. Then fall on the grass,' said Māncāla, giving her leave.

Without the blessings of a woman, there is no light. Without the blessing of a virtuous woman, there is not even a pot of holy water. Without the blessings of a wife, there is no heaven.

After taking leave of his wife, Bāluḍu went to his ram. It was the offspring of a mountain sheep and a young lion. A mountain sheep was mounted by a lion. The offspring of their union was called an *erduka* (ram) . . .[45] Bāluḍu took leave of his wife, went to his ram, and got on it. When he spurred his steed, it rose into the sky and landed by his younger brothers at the *jammi* tree.

Episode 8

The Fall of Anapōtu Rāju*

> Bāluḍu sends Anapōtu Rāju back to Mēḍapi on a pretext. Māncāla tells Anapōtu Rāju what she has done. He tries to rejoin Bāluḍu. The Brāhmaṇ takes his own life. Akka Pinakka reports his death to those in Mēḍapi. Citlinga Mahādēvi burns herself on her husband's pyre.

Bāluḍu arrives at the *jammi* tree where his younger brothers are waiting to depart for Kāryamapūḍi. He tells them that he has forgotten his pearl necklace and signet-ring at his wife's house. He asks Velamala Doranna if he will go and get it. Velamala Doranna asks to be

*Detailed summary.

excused, and Bāluḍu asks Kammari Patti and Cākala Candu in turn. But they also give excuses. Bāluḍu then turns to Anapōtu Rāju, who immediately agrees to go.

Anapōtu Rāju asks if he should take his servant along, and Bāluḍu agrees that he should. When he mounts his steed and is about to depart, the Brāhmaṇ asks for some proof to offer Māncāla. He wants something to show that Bāluḍu has really sent him. Bāluḍu tells him about some memorable falls of the dice during a game he played with Māncāla. He also tells about the loss of the pearl from her necklace. With this information, Anapōtu Rāju takes leave of Bāluḍu and gallops off with his servants to Māncāla's house.

No sooner is Anapōtu Rāju out of sight than Bāluḍu, heeding his wife's words, composes a letter ordering him not to follow the others to Kāryamapūḍi. He orders Anapōtu Rāju to remain in Mēḍapi to guard the womenfolk while the men are gone. He draws proscriptions in the names of Pōtarāju, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Akka Pinakka, and Ankālaparamēśvari. Tying the letter to the branches of a banyan tree, he and his brothers proceed to Mēla Creek where they make camp for the night.

Heeding Bāluḍu's words, Anapōtu Rāju hurries to Māncāla's house. There, he calls Māncāla, using many flattering and affectionate words such as jasmine bud, perfect gold, and musk. Māncāla, tired out from the long night with her husband, is asleep. But his call awakens her, and she summons her maidservants, telling them to bring her brother-in-law into the house.

When Anapōtu Rāju asks for the pearl necklace and signet-ring, Māncāla becomes very angry. She tells him that she has nothing. She demands that he leave and asks proof that he really came from her husband. When Anapōtu Rāju presents the proof, she weeps. She tells the Brāhmaṇ that she is now separating him from his elder brother as he previously came between her and her husband. She tells what is destined to happen: Anapōtu Rāju will fall as a lone Hero by the *jammi* tree; Bāluḍu and his brothers will go to Kāryamapūḍi; they will sacrifice Narasinga Rāju, cutting his throat with swords; finally, Bāluḍu will fall on the grass. She is surprised at his ignorance of destiny.[46]

Anapōtu Rāju's heart breaks. He tells her that what he did in the past was for her own benefit and was neither sin nor treason. If he had not kept them apart, they would have satisfied their sexual appetites and lost their opportunity for fame. After the battle, she, her husband, the Heroes, and the warriors will be restored by Brahma Nāyuḍu and Akka Pinakka. They will dwell together in Guttikoṇḍa cave. It is beyond his power to change the course of destiny.

Māncāla foretells the events in Kāryamapūḍi: On Thursday will be

the *pūja* for Bētāluḍu.[47] On Friday will be the rites of purification. On Saturday will be the feast with all castes sitting down together. On Sunday will be the worship of the weapons. On Monday will be the great battle. On Tuesday everyone will fall on the banks of the Nāgulēru.

Anapōtu Rāju cries out to Bāluḍu, blaming him for his deceit and protesting that no one would have born the guilt for his death on the battlefield. Remembering the case of Droṇa and Kripa,[48] who died in battle with no one being blamed, he says that he should be allowed to fight. Anapōtu Rāju looks back on his life with Bāluḍu and concludes that he is now reaping the fruit of his association with Velamas and other Śūdras. Weeping, and resigned to his fate, he goes sorrowfully to his horse.

Taking his servant with him, Anapōtu Rāju commands the horse to go to his elder brother. The horse goes straight to the *jammi* tree. Anapōtu Rāju is delighted because he thinks that his brother is still there. But after he tethers the horse, he cannot find a trace of Bāluḍu. He knows that he has really been left behind. He looks and looks, sorrowing as he does so, but Bāluḍu is really gone.

The Brāhmaṇ mounts his horse and begins whipping it and cursing it for its failure to go to Bāluḍu. The horse trembles and shakes but does not move. As it weeps it tells him what a foolish Brāhmaṇ he is for abusing it so. Then, raising its head, the horse points to the message hanging in the tree. Anapōtu Rāju takes the message down and reads it.

He ignores the first proscription because it is on the feet of Brahma Nāyuḍu who is his father, as well. He ignores the second because he too is a devotee of Ankālamma. He ignores the third proscription, which is on the feet of Pōtarāju, for the same reason. But he is stopped by the proscription on Akka Pinakka who is like an elder sister to all the men of Palnāḍu. She must not be violated.

Nearby is the well called the 'Well of Battle'. After tying his horse to a banyan tree, Anapōtu Rāju sends his servants for a sharpening stone and some other small items. He takes his weapon to the well. When he first took up his weapon, it was to accompany his brothers in battle against the armies of Nalagāma Rāju and Nāyakurālu. Now that he has been abandoned by Bālacandruḍu, he sees no further use for his weapon. He throws it into the well and jumps in after it.

In the well are three *lingas*. Anapōtu Rāju emerges with them and sets them up against an *āre*[49] tree. Around them he constructs a dike. As the Brāhmaṇ enters the basin, he looks toward Strī Vīrla Mēḍapi.[50] Akka Pinakka is hurrying down the path from Mēḍapi. The wives of

the men who are at Kāryamapūḍi have prepared meals for their husbands. Akka Pinakka has been dispatched to carry the food to the men.

When Akka Pinakka asks why he is there by himself, Anapōtu Rāju tells her that Bāluḍu sent him back for some things. When he returned, Bāluḍu was gone. Anapōtu Rāju does not mention the proscriptions, but tells her that he will accompany her as soon as he has finished eating. Bringing her palanquin to a halt, Akka Pinakka waits under the banyan tree.

Anapōtu Rāju goes to the basin and begins to do *pūja* to the *lingas*. He cries out, asking what he should do. He calls on his patron God, Cennayya. He also calls on Bāluḍu, asking what he should do. He has associated himself with a Velama against the advice of his own Brāhmaṇ caste members. Now he has been abandoned. At last, realizing that what Brahma has written cannot be avoided, he is resigned to his fate.

Determined to prove that a Brāhmaṇ is not without heroic wrath, Anapōtu Rāju calls on Bāluḍu to observe what he is about to do. Full of heroic wrath, he raises his writing style[51] and puts it to his throat. He stabs, but the blade turns aside.[52] He curses the style for its failure. Then, taking a whetstone, he sharpens the style, lubricating it with oil and milk. Fashioning a cup out of a fallen leaf, he fills it with his own blood. In the cup of blood he puts his medals and his sacred thread. He calls on Ankālamma, Cennayya, and Pōtarāju and blames them for their lack of mercy. He blames Bāluḍu for attending to his wife's words and thinking that he would incur the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇ.

Anapōtu Rāju carves off his own head and falls to the earth. Rivers of blood gush out, flooding everything with red blood. And the Brāhmaṇ falls in a pool of his own blood.

Meanwhile, Akka Pinakka sits waiting under the banyan tree. Because Anapōtu Rāju has not invited her in, she stays outside. When she at last calls out to him, he is dead and does not hear. She decides that he must be worshipping the *lingas* and waits a while longer. When there is no answer to her second and third call, she becomes worried. She notices the crows that have gathered around the tree, attracted by the blood. She wonders how they dare to approach if he still alive.

Akka Pinakka opens the gate, looks in, and sees her younger brother in a pool of blood. She swoons.

Regaining consciousness, Akka Pinakka takes the medals, sacred thread, and cup of blood. Putting them in her palanquin, she realizes that she must not go on to Kāryamapūḍi but return to Mēḍapi.

Akka Pinakka tells Anapōtu Rāju's wife, Citlinga Mahādēvi, that

her husband has fallen as a lone Hero by the *jammi* tree. At this news, Citlinga Dēvi calls for her father to prepare the funeral pyre. He does so while Akka Pinakka sends Brāhmaṇs for the body. At first the Brāhmaṇs refuse to touch the blood-soaked body, but after Akka Pinakka has sent them many presents, they agree to do so out of greed for the gifts. They bring the Brāhmaṇ to Mēḍapi and build a monument.

Citlinga Mahādēvi is covered with tumeric and decorated with gold and diamonds. On the way to the pyre, she passes Māncāla's house. Māncāla asks where she is going and Citlinga Mahādēvi says that she is the wife of Anapōtu Rāju. She is going to the pyre.

Māncāla tells her not to think of herself as a widow going to the pyre, but as a bride going to her marriage. Bāluḍu is also going to die, and she herself will be going to the pyre in a couple of days.

The killer raises his sword. Citlinga Mahādēvi does obeisance to the assembly. Giving the credit for what has happened to Ankālaparamēśvari and Cennakēśvarasvāmi, Citlinga Mahādēvi leaps into the flames. Oil is poured on the blaze, and it mounts high into the sky. When the fire dies down, a beam and a stone are placed over the spot.

Episode 9

Bālacandruḍu's Battle with Bangāla Rāju

Bāluḍu digs a seep hole in the name of Anapōtu Rāju, and it fills with blood. Cennayya tells the boys how to purify themselves. Bangāla Rāju's armies attack Bāluḍu. The attackers panic. Bāluḍu recites his lineage and chooses a tree as his weapon. The battle is waged according to *dharma*. Bāluḍu beheads Bangāla Rāju and sacrifices his flesh on the battlefield.

Bāluḍu and his younger brothers arrived at the Mēla Creek canyon. The sun was setting when they arrived, and they spent the four watches of the night there.

When they rose in the morning, Bāluḍu said, 'O Younger Brothers, we are going to Kāryamapūḍi. First we must wash our faces. Younger Brothers, we must dig seep holes.'

When Bāluḍu said this, the younger brothers began digging seep holes. Each of the five dug his own hole. Bāluḍu dug two holes, one with each hand.

As Bāluḍu dug, he said, 'The seep hole that I dig with my right hand is for myself. The seep hole that I dig with my left hand belongs to my younger brother, Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, Anapōtu Rāju.'

Assigning names to them, he dug two holes with his two hands. The

seep holes which the younger brothers dug filled with water. Into the seep hole which Bāluḍu dug in the name of his younger brother, blood came gurgling and bubbling, filling the hole. Seeing the blood, the younger brothers scrambled to their feet.

'O Younger Brothers, by the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees; by the wondrous *rāvi* trees; by the liberating tree; my younger brother, Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, must have fallen. The Brāhmaṇ is revealing his steadfastness to us in the water, Younger Brothers.

'Younger Brother! Younger Brother! O Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, we were born on the same day; our ceremonial uncleanliness was on the same day; we were raised together; we married at the same time. We first mounted horses together, buckled on arms together, and entered the court together. We went to fencing class together. O Younger Brother, I listened to my wife and abandoned you. I abandoned my younger brother on the path. O Younger Brother!' said Bāluḍu and was terribly grieved.

In his grief he finally said, 'Never mind! What must happen cannot be avoided. . . . Never mind!'

When he finished speaking, he turned to his younger brothers and said, 'O Younger Brothers, we are polluted. How shall we rid ourselves of this pollution and go on to Kāryamapūḍi? What must we do now?' Bāluḍu sat, wondering what to do.

Cennayya of Mācerla, Madana Kēśavayya,[53] assumed the form of an aged Brāhmaṇ. He combed his brightly shining, well-trimmed beard. Assuming the form of an aged man, he came trembling and shaking. Cennuḍu came as a Brāhmaṇ with an almanac in his hands. He wore ochre robes and carried a water pot, an ash pot, sacred grass, and a deerskin. The God came in the incarnation of a Brāhmaṇ.

The younger brothers saw him coming and went out to meet him. 'O Father! Worthy Brāhmaṇ, where do you come from? What is the name of your town? What is your name?' they said.

'O Father, I am from Kāśi. I am on my way to Kānci. My surname is Vaikuṇṭham. My name is Nārāyaṇa Dāsulu,' he said.

'Come! Come, O Brāhmaṇ,' they said and made him sit down.

Then the Brāhmaṇ made them prepare a pool of water and a pool of milk. He made them all take nine baths in the pool of water and nine baths in the pool of milk. Then he covered them with sacred grass and said, 'O Father, your pollution is gone. You have nothing more to fear. Go, then!'

Lord Cennayya disappeared. This is what Bāluḍu and his younger brothers did when he was gone.

Bāluḍu said, 'O Younger Brothers, we are going to battle at

Kāryamapūḍi. We will fight a terrible, terrible battle against the whole army of Nalagāma Rāju. We do not know whether we shall return or not. Therefore, Younger Brothers, let us play a game of dice.'

No sooner did Bāluḍu finish speaking that the younger brothers spread out blankets and pillows. All six of them sat down. Saying Bārā! Bārā!' they began playing deuce-eight dice.

While they were playing, Nāyakurālu stationed a detachment in the Mēla Creek canyon to prevent anyone from coming in or going out. The detachment included elephants, camels, horses, irregulars, and more. She put it under the command of Bangāla Rāju and stationed it there.

When Nāyakurālu saw Bāluḍu and his brothers, she went to the Rāju and said, 'Great Lord! Rāju! Bangāla Rāju, look here! Bāluḍu and his brothers are on their to Kāryamapūḍi.'

'If you will give us leave, we will bring back the heads of Bāluḍu and his brothers,' said some of the soldiers, taking *tāmbūlam*.

'We will return with the lives of Bāluḍu and his brothers,' said some of the soldiers, Rājus of Rājus, taking *tāmbūlam*.

'We will drive Bāluḍu and his brothers back to Strī Vīrla Mēḍapi,' said others, accepting *tāmbūlam*.

'Listen to me, Soldiers! Do as you have promised. Whoever returns with the head of Bāluḍu, to that man I will give the weight of Bāluḍu's head in gold. Go! Go, then!' she said, giving them leave.

Among the Rājus were Vītateppalavāru, Vīnalāvāru, Āvālavāru, Āṇemuvāru, Koṇḍaviṇḍalavāru, Gōvinduvāru, Mutasānivāru, Muyyūruvāru, Narmālavāru, Nāyunivāru, Tamalacukkalavāru, and Palapartivāru. They came with elephants, camels, and horses. They carried shield, dagger, lance, club, mace, blowdart, axe, and battle-axe. They advanced on Bāluḍu and his brothers as opium smoke spreads, covering everything in darkness. They filled all the four directions. They wielded spears, arrows, swords, maces, and battle-axes as they approached.

Bālacandruḍu did not take note of their advance. But his younger brother, Velamala Doranna, saw them coming.

Noting their approach, Velamala Doranna said, 'O Elder Brother! Bālacandra!'

'What is it, Younger Brother?' he said.

'O Elder Brother, your dice game is ruined. O Elder Brother! Bālacandra, your dice game is finished. Look! Look, how Bangāla Rāju's armies are surrounding us on all sides, Elder Brother. They are surrounding us like a cloud of opium smoke. There is no escape for us. There are armies on all sides, Elder Brother.'

When he heard the report, Bāluḍu laughed aloud and said, 'O Younger Brother, you have no reason to be afraid. As long as I am here, you need have no fear. As long as our patron God, Cennakēśvarasvāmi, is with us, we have no reason to be afraid. We have the bronze war drum from the days of our grandfathers. O Younger Brother, beat our grandfathers' bronze war drum.'

When Bālacandruḍu had spoken, Velamala Doranna had the grandfathers' bronze war drum beaten. 'Gubul! Gubul! Gubul!' sounded the bronze war drum.

The soldiers heard the roar of the war drum. 'No! No! No! No! Bāluḍu is coming from that direction. No, here he comes from this direction. Look, there! Look, here!' they said and ran with terror into the forest.

When they heard the sound of the war drum, they were afraid to fight and fled. As they were fleeing, their outer garments caught on thorn bushes: *tumma*, *balusu*, *candra*, and others.

As they fled through the forest, their garments were caught. They thought that they were being grabbed by Bāluḍu and his younger brothers. They said, 'O Father! Bālacandra! Adē salām, Mahārāja![54] Bālacandra! Adē salām! If we escape this time, we will live for a hundred years more. If you have a bit of alkaline soil, give that to us and we will live on it. We can eat *balusu* leaves and get by on them. Call us and we will come at once. Great Soul, we are at your command.'

The soldiers were very alarmed and fled in all directions. Bangāla Rāju and part of his army were watching from the hill. 'Oh, oh! The soldiers are unduly alarmed; they are fleeing. What shall we do?' said the Rāju.

He spread tumeric and sugar on doves and released them. He regrouped the fleeing forces. All the soldiers assembled: Śimbuni Muta wielding the double-edged sword; Bobbili Muta wielding the great sword; brave Tēvula Pōtu Nīḍu; Gandham Oppi Nīḍu; Sūgaṇḍi, the wrestler who fights what he sees. With hairlock, garlands of flowers, cymbals, great drums, and bells, there were 24,000 Gōsangi soldiers.

He regrouped them and said, 'What is the meaning of this, Rājus? Why are you alarmed, and why have you unfaithfully fled?'

'Father! Bangāla Rāju, we thought that we were being surrounded by Bāluḍu. That is why we became alarmed and fled. If Bāluḍu comes forth to face us, we will drive him before us and trample him with our elephants. We will kill him with our rutting elephants,' they said, and again they accepted *tāmbūlam*.

'We will behead him,' said some.

'We will take his life,' said others.

'We will drive him back to Strī Vīrla Mēḍapi,' said the rest.

Then they took leave of the Rāju and charged to the middle of the valley.

There, in the middle of the valley, they said, 'Hey! What is your city? Who have you beaten? Who is your Rāju. What is the name of your guru? Tell us the name of your city. What is your caste? What is your clan? Tell us! If you don't tell us, we will behead you. As one strikes a sparrow in a tree, we will strike you down.'

Bāluḍu laughed and rose to his feet. 'O Soldiers! So you demand to know my caste and clan? I will tell you. So you will knock me down like a sparrow out of a tree? That's just fine,' he said and he leaped to his feet.

He wore a trussed-up truss, the truss of Hanumān; a lower cloth with knot tied on knot; folds, garlands, badges . . .; a turban like the moon wound round his head; . . .; rings in his ears; a large sapphire; fine chest ornaments.

With trussed-up truss, Bāluḍu rose up and went to the grass on the bank of the Nāgulēru. There grew a fine, straight *ēpa* tree.[55] 'O Śrīman Nārāyaṇa![56] Cennakēśvarasāmi, where are you?' he said. Grabbing the top of the tree, he yanked it up by the roots. Stripping off the branches, he held the bare trunk in his hands.

'Hey, there! I promised to tell you my caste and clan, didn't I? Well, now I am ready to tell you. Listen! From the lotus navel of Brahma, Śankumu was born. To Śankumu was born Niśankumu; to Niśankumu was born Ābustuḍu; to Ābustuḍu was born Hariścandruḍu; to Hariścandruḍu was born Buddhuḍu; to Buddhuḍu was born Punarākṣasuḍu; to Punarākṣasuḍu was born Tambivalagāma; to Tambivalagāma was born grandfather Bētāluḍu. Soldiers, are you listening? To grandfather Bētāluḍu was born Vicitravīryuḍu; to Vicitravīryuḍu was born Vīragāma Rāju; to Vīragāma Rāju was born Kritavīryuḍu; to Kritavīryuḍu's daughter was born Kārttika Rāju. O Soldiers, Kārttika Rāju had sixty arms, 100,000 wives, a crore of sons, and ten crores of grandsons. He was a mighty man. My Rāju, Alugu Rāju, is a scion and upholder of the glorious lunar race. Of Ātrēya clan, he bears the titles "Bhīma" and "Bhāgavatōtamuḍu".[57] That Rāju's minister is Viṣṇu himself. He is my father, Brahma Nāyuḍu. He was born to Rēcerla Doḍḍa Nāyuḍu and the lotus-eyed Śīlamma. He is Kriṣṇa, the incarnation of mercy. My father was born of Śīlamma. I am his son. My name is Bāluḍu; I am a second Kunjuluḍu.[58]

'Hey, there! Soldiers, to your Singa Rāju,[59] my name is fiery lightning. Do you know that? To your Narasinga Rāju, my name is knife of

the Nandas.[40] Hey, there! O Soldiers, to your cowardly Rāju, I am the knife in his side. My name is Bāluḍu; I am a second Kunjaluḍu,' said Bāluḍu.

'Hey, there! Bālacandra, you may be Bāluḍu and Brahma- Rudra,[41] but look there. Our . . . horse, Bangāla Rāju is waiting on the hill. He has given us leave and ordered us to behead you,' they said.

'You won't let us go on? You won't let us pass?' said Bālacandruḍu as he laughed aloud.

He prayed to his patron God, Cennakēśvarasvāmi. He prayed to Goddess Ankāladēvi. Wielding the *ēpa* tree, he clashed with the detachment and began fighting.

This was the way that they fought: like two bulls mauling, like rutting elephants churning the earth, like hills clashing together, like a tiger scattering cattle in the forest.

Again they fought: like Rāma and Rāvaṇa battling, like Vāli and Sugrīva duelling, like Karṇa and Arjuna coming together.

When Bāluḍu clashed with Bangāla Rāju's soldiers, the sky turned red; the heavens shook; the earth became a burying ground; comets filled the heavens. . . . They fought and raged while heads fell to the earth. Heads lay gaping on the earth. Chest to chest fought the spirited men. Men . . .

Some climbed anthills; some fled to towns; some climbed trees; some were cut off; some were tangled up; and some let down their hair. Thus did the soldiers flee.

Bāluḍu looked at them and wondered greatly at the sight. 'I am fighting this battle according to *dharma*. I am a man who does not fail to do that which he sets out to do. I am a man of Palnāḍu who does not go back on his word. If someone begs for mercy, I must show mercy. If someone asks for assurance of pardon on the battlefield, I must give it. I am fighting according to *dharma*.

'Listen to me, Younger Brothers! O Younger Brothers!'

'What is it Elder Brother?'

'Listen to me, Younger Brothers! Heroic Bulls! Greater Warriors than I! My Younger Brothers! Velamala Doranna with rings on your fingers! Kammari Patti with work bracelets on your ankles! Kummari Patti with the earthen plate! Cākala Candu with the great bordered plate! Mangala Patti, you who take golden razors and fashion beautiful hair-dos! Younger Brothers, we are fighting according to *dharma*. What kind of man is the man who climbs an anthill?'

'The man who cannot fight and climbs an anthill is like Ādiśēṣu.'

'He must not be struck. It is a sin. What sort of man is the man who flees and climbs a tree?'

'Elder Brother, the man who flees and climbs a tree is the same as a fruit-bat.'

'He must not be struck. It is a sin. What about the man who sucks his fingers? O Younger Brothers, what kind of man is the man who is unable to fight and puts his fingers in his mouth and sucks them?'

'He is the same as a baby, Elder Brother.'

'Fine. He must not be struck. Those who come to the battlefield, turn their backs, and flee, what sort of men are they?'

'They are like Piśācis, the spirits of the battlefield. They are a kind of Śakti.'

'You must not strike them. Now, what kind of man is the man who hides his face in the grass?'

'O Elder Brother, we will tell you. Men who put their faces in the grass are the same as cattle. They are the same as dumb, four-legged cattle.'

'Don't bother with that kind of men. Don't touch them! Why should we concern ourselves with them? There is nothing to be gained from striking their kind and cutting them up! Where is Bangāla Rāju? Bring him here. Where has he gone?' asked Bāluḍu, searching here and there.

Asking here and there as he went, Bāluḍu went leaping and bounding to the place where Bangāla Rāju was. Bāluḍu and his younger brothers went after Bangāla Rāju.

'Hey there, Bangāla Rāju! What is the meaning of this? Where have you gone? Have you hidden? Have you seen me coming and hidden? Bangāla Rāju, have you hidden to escape my attack? Why do you flee from me? Come out if you are willing to fight me. Come! Come, Bangāla Rāju!' called Bāluḍu.

Then Bangāla Rāju's heart shattered. He said, 'The writing leaf that Śiva gave me is torn today.[42] Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sambāśiva! Great Soul! Gauri Manōhara! Gangōttumānga! Nāgakankana! Śiva! Nandivāhanuḍu! Śankara! Ganagajāsurabhanga! Kāmabasmānga! Lalita! Sita Kandhara! Layakālakarta! Sakalabhūtēśvara! Sarabhāvatāra! Pālākṣi! Bhūtēśvara! Īśvara! Lord, listen to me when I call on you. Father! Īśvara, Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sambāśiva, the writing leaf that you gave me is torn today. O Śankara! Lord, you gave the leaf, and you yourself have torn it. What more is there for me to do? Who is my refuge? O Īśvara!' he grieved.

'What Brahma has written cannot be avoided. What must happen must happen. Never mind. There is no escape,' he said, and he clashed with Bāluḍu.

He clashed with Bāluḍu and the two of them fought a terrible, terrible battle. They fought and raged while heads fell on the earth. Heads lay gaping on the ground. He fought a terrible battle against Bāluḍu. The Rāju was the elder. Bāluḍu was the younger. As they fought, Bāluḍu caught hold of the Rāju's clothing. Grabbing his garments, he threw him to the earth. He drew his sharp dagger. Nearby was an *āre* tree. He set three *lingas* against the tree.

'Hey, there, Bangāla Rāju! Do you hide from me? Did you see me coming and hide in order to escape my attack? Did you think I was a youth? Though the chili be small, it does not lack hotness. Think! Think about your grandfather and your great-grandfather. Think about your mother and father, too. You have come to fight me, haven't you? Think about your grandfather and your great-grandfather. Think of your assembly of Gods,' said Bāluḍu.

He drew his dagger from its sheath. He carved off Bangāla Rāju's head. When he beheaded Bangāla Rāju, Bāluḍu set the head in front of the *lingas*. He offered it cassia and benzoin. He did obeisance to it. Bangāla Rāju was a Rāju and Bāluḍu was a Velama. Therefore, the Rāju was the elder.

'My elder brother is greater than I,' thought Bāluḍu. He poured water, saying, 'Speak!' He bathed the head and said, 'Speak! Speak! Speak! Speak, Bangāla Rāju!'

Time after time, Bāluḍu caused Bangāla Rāju's head to speak. His wife, Māncāla, had sent three measures of rice. He put that in a pot. Then he poured water into the pot, added the head, and boiled it in the middle of the battlefield. When it was well boiled, he put it on a palanquin.

'Poli! Poli! Pulō! Pulō!' cried the *pancamālu*[63] of Palnāḍu. They threw rice and flesh in the air as Bālacandruḍu climbed Nalagoṇḍa along with his brothers.

Episode 10

The Arbitration*

Bāluḍu surveys the assembled armies from Nalagoṇḍa. He leaps from Nalagoṇḍa on to Kannama's tent. The story of Bāluḍu's birth. Kannama and Bāluḍu fight in front of Komma Rāju. Komma Rāju describes the losses he has suffered. Terms of peace are reached and the sides prepare to feast together.

*Detailed summary.

Bāluḍu looks down from the top of Nalagoṇḍa and surveys the four directions. Nāyakurālu's army and the artisan castes of Palnāḍu cover the earth in all directions. They are as numerous as the sand of the earth.

Seeing the armies that are assembled below, Bāluḍu weeps for the absence of his younger brother, Anapōtu Rāju. He weeps for having listened to his wife and for the deceit he employed to leave Anapōtu Rāju behind on the path. Further, he grieves because the Brāhman is not there to reckon the strength of Nāyakurālu's army.

Velamala Doranna approaches and assures him that there is no cause for grief. Yesterday Anapōtu Rāju died; tomorrow they will all die. He offers to assess the strength of the armies. Nāyakurālu's army extends to Guttikoṇḍa-Jānapāḍu in the east. In the west it extends to the banks of the Candravanka at Mācerla. In the south it extends to Nalagoṇḍa and the Nāgulēru. In the north it reaches as far as Pondugula-Vāḍapalli.

Hearing what a great multitude Nāyakurālu has assembled, Bāluḍu laughs and asks about the Mācerla army. Velamala Doranna assures him that, though they are few, each man is capable of handling 100,000 of the enemy. Together they are capable of fighting ten crores in battle.

The forces of Mācerla are assembled on the plain of Kāryamapūḍi. Among them are Sūr Nīḍu, Malli Nīḍu, Brahma Nāyuḍu, Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, the Sixty-six Heroes, and the Seventy-seven Warriors. The Gurajāla army consists of Nāyakurālu, Nalagāma Rāju, and all their armies.

The Reḍḍis of the surrounding villages come to the court to tell Nalagāma Rāju that they have no desire for war. They suggest that Palnāḍu be divided in half with each side taking ninety-nine villages, leaving everyone peaceful and happy.

Meanwhile, Bāluḍu sends his brothers ahead to Kāryamapūḍi and prepares to mount his ram. Below, on the plain, Kannama Nīḍu has bathed and is in his tent affixing his sacred marks. Suddenly Bāluḍu's steed leaps from the top of Nalagoṇḍa and strikes Kannama's tent like a bolt of lightning. The tent collapses and lands on Kannama's head. Kannama calls his younger brothers and orders them to find out who has dared to land on his tent. He wants them to return with the culprit but not to engage him in battle.

The younger brothers set out to catch the culprit, but he does not allow them to approach. They report their failure to Kannama, but they still do not realize that the intruder is Bāluḍu. Kannama laughs. Battle ready, he leaps in front of his younger brother, Bāluḍu, deman-

ding that he identify himself. When Kannama threatens to behead him, Bāluḍu laughs and asks him why he is so upset about being kicked in the head this time.

Then Bāluḍu tells the story of his birth: The childless Aitamma was granted a boon by Cennakēśvarasvāmi, and Bāluḍu was born. Everyone except Brahma Nāyuḍu was overjoyed. When the elders asked him why he was concerned, Brahma Nāyuḍu explained that he did not yet know what the stars foretold for the child. The Brāhmaṇs then revealed that the child was destined to destroy his relatives and all of Palnāḍu.

Brahma Nāyuḍu had a chest built and supplied with food. The chest was placed on Kannama's head and he was dispatched to abandon the child in the ocean. After passing many villages, in the middle of the night, Bāluḍu began to kick Kannama's head through the chest.

When Kannama hears the story, he knows that Bāluḍu has come to join the arbitration and war. Bāluḍu asks to whom he should report, and Kannama tells him that Komma Rāju is the senior among them. It was Komma Raju's son, Ala Rācamallu, who was sent as an ambassador to Gurajāla by Brahma Nāyuḍu. In Gurajāla Ala Rācamallu was slain by Nāyakurālu. Komma Rāju is still grieving for the death of his only son.

Bāluḍu, his brothers, and some of his soldiers report to Komma Rāju. Bāluḍu does obeisance. Komma Rāju is facing east, but when Bāluḍu bows before him, he turns his face to the west. Again Bāluḍu bows, and Komma Rāju turns to the south. The third time, he turns to the north. Bāluḍu is enraged by the Rāju's rebuff. He says that Komma Rāju has become thick-headed from eating coarse food and suggests that a remedy is needed. Bāluḍu draws his weapon and brandishes it before his uncle.

Kannama is shocked and fears that the rash youth might attack the Rāju. Heroically, he blocks the path and tries to explain that the Rāju is only grieving for his son. Bāluḍu misconstrues Kannama's intent and thinks that he is being challenged to fight. Kannama Nīḍu and Bālacandruḍu begin fighting in front of the Rāju. Komma Rāju is afraid of what the elders will think if he does not stop the fight. No one knows the depths of his grief over the loss of his son.

Komma Rāju orders the two brothers to stop. Then he asks Bāluḍu why he, Komma Rāju, should accept obeisance in a land that is not his own. His land is Kaḷyāṇ and Umanabāḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu went to Umanabāḍu and married Komma Rāju's three daughters to the three Maliḍēva Rājus. After the marriage, Komma Rāju accompanied Brahma Nāyuḍu to Palnāḍu. From that time on, death became the

share of Komma Rāju's people and joy the share of Brahma Nāyuḍu's. Komma Rāju asks to know what honour and respect he owes to Bāluḍu.

Bāluḍu demands an explanation of Komma Rāju's allegation that death has been his share and the pleasure all on the other side. Komma Rāju explains: Nāyakurālu was building the Dūpa tank in Gurajāla. With devious intent, Brahma Nāyuḍu sent Guṇḍa Bōyuḍu and Jaṭṭiṇḍa Bōyuḍu, two of Komma Rāju's great warriors, to attack the workmen. But Nāyakurālu caught the two, had them thrown under the dike, and buried them alive. That was one loss that Komma Rāju suffered.[84]

Komma Rāju's second loss came when Lankanna was guarding the Palnāḍu herds. He was slain by the herdsmen sent by Nāyakurālu. The third loss was Bāla Gopanna's death at the cock fight. The final loss came when Brahma Nāyuḍu sent Komma Rāju's only son, Ala Rācamallu, as ambassador to Gurajāla. Ala Rācamallu died, and Brahma Nāyuḍu was responsible for his death.

Bāluḍu is mollified by what Komma Rāju has to say, and they all go together to see Brahma Nāyuḍu. Brahma Nāyuḍu and the elders are pleased that Bāluḍu has come to avenge Ala Rācamallu's death. But when Bāluḍu becomes enraged, his father tells him that Ala Racamallu is dead and that dead men do not come back. The other elders are also of the mind that there is nothing to be gained from going to war. Furthermore, Nalagāma Rāju and Nāyakurālu have agreed to return the land that they had previously claimed for their own. There is no longer any need for war. The Reḍḍi landlords are also satisfied with the agreement. Brahma Nāyuḍu and the elders are ready to accept the terms.

Bāluḍu has vowed to take the life of Narasinga Rāju, and he is a man of his word. But the elders report that Nāyakurālu has offered to hand over the Rāju, alive, to be done with as Bāluḍu sees fit. This is the basis for the treaty of peace. Bāluḍu sees nothing to be gained from opposing the will of the elders. It would be foolish for him, alone, to oppose the settlement. He sits and thinks about the implications. He is almost ready to agree to the terms.

Meanwhile, Brahma Nāyuḍu has had a feast prepared. Leaf plates are set on the ground and the meal is served. Then all the people on both sides sit down together in a single line to eat. They are ready to eat a common meal and to return to their own lands.

Episode 11

The Battle of Kāryamapūḍi

Akka Pinakka arrives just as they are about to sit down to eat. Bāluḍu goes berserk at the sight of Anapōtu Rāju's blood. He wins the right to the battle. The Gōsangis refuse to participate in the battle. Bāluḍu challenges the Rājus to battle. Narasinga Rāju leaves Gurajāla amid inauspicious omens. Śiva refuses to support him. Nāyakurālu runs from the battlefield. Bāluḍu is tricked and wounded. He follows his wife's advice and calls on Garutmantuḍu. Narasinga Rāju rejoices, thinking himself to be victorious. He returns to the battlefield. Bāluḍu slays the Rāju, worships his head, and gives it to Komma Rāju. Brahma Nāyuḍu accuses Bāluḍu of being a traitor. The death of Bāluḍu.

Brahma Nāyuḍu is beyond description, the seer of the human world, Viṣṇu incarnate. He knew what was about to happen.

'O Heroes! Elders! Seventy-two Clansmen! Father, we have come to a peace agreement and all is well. But go and see if, perchance, someone is coming from Mēḍapi with blessed food. Go and see, Kannama,' he said.

As Brahma Nāyuḍu spoke, Akka Pinakka was approaching. She had taken the Brāhmaṇ's blood to Mēḍapi to report that he had died under the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees. Then she and others had taken the Brāhmaṇ's body back to Mēḍapi and constructed a tomb. Then, getting food for the feast from each man's wife, Akka Pinakka had come hurrying along in her palanquin.

'O Father, Akka Pinakka is coming,' said Kannama, after looking down the the path.

'Wait! Wait, Rājus and Reḍḍis! Great Souls, everyone must wait. Akka Pinakka is coming with food. Her word must not be transgressed.'

Others came bringing pots of food as Akka Pinakka arrived with her bearers. Then Akka Pinakka distributed all the food for the feast to each man individually. But she gave nothing to Bāluḍu and his younger brothers. Brahma Nāyuḍu was surprised at this.

He said, 'What does this mean, Woman? Akka Pinakka, why have you given nothing to my son?'

'Father! Brahma Nāyuḍu, you came here three months and fifteen days ago. Your wife sent things for you, and I have given those things to you. But Bālacandruḍu came only yesterday. Neither his wife, Māncāla, nor his mother, Aitamma, have sent anything with me.' she said.

'Woman, how can this be? It is not according to *dharma* for a father to eat while his son sits in line with nothing. Give some of mine to my son,' he said.

'Father, please eat,' said Akka Pinakka.

'No! Woman, it is not according to *dharma* for a father to eat while his son sits with nothing. It is not according to *dharma* for me to remain in the food line. Give him a bit of mine,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

Then Akka Pinakka went to Bālacandruḍu and said, 'O Younger Brother! Bālacandruḍu, listen to what I have to say. O Younger Brother, near the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees; by the wondrous *rāvi* tree is your younger brother, the worthy Brāhmaṇ, Anapōtu Rāju. He has sent you something very sweet. Father! Bālacandra, eat your fill!'

This is what Akka Pinakka did. On Bāluḍu's leaf plate she served up the Holy Badge of Kāḷi,[45] the sacred thread, and the leaf cup of blood. No sooner had she served him the blood, holy badge of Kāḷi and the sacred thread than Bāluḍu welled up with rage. 'Hey!' He preened his great sharp moustache; he combed his tiger moustache; his eyes reddened.

He said, 'My younger brother, Dēva-Brāhmaṇa, has fallen by the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees, by the wondrous *rāvi* tree, by the liberating tree. Great Soul, won't you come? Hey, Rājus! Hey, Reḍḍis!'

There were Brāhmaṇs, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras there. 'What is the use of this arbitration? What is the meaning of this politicking?' said the elders who had been enraged in the peace talks.

'Hey, Elder Brother! Kannama, drive them out! Put a staff on your shoulder and drive them out,' said Bāluḍu as he scrambled to his feet. Bāluḍu's younger brothers also scrambled to their feet. All of them rose to their feet.

Kannama put a staff on his shoulder. 'It's over! It's over! Take off! Who are you, anyway? There is no peace to be had here! This is no time for politics! I'll tell you why. The one who fell by the *ārēḍu*, *mārēḍu*, and *jammi* trees was my younger brother, the Dēva-Brāhmaṇa. If anyone among you can restore my younger brother to life, there will be a chance for peace. I will consent to it. If not, I want war! I'll never give my consent! I won't allow it even if Brahma and Viṣṇu order it! Enough of this!' he said.

No one saw any way to avoid what was about to happen. Both sides

rose up and trampled the feast. They threw the food into the river where it mixed with the water. No one wanted peace.

Three months and fifteen days before, the elders had come to wage war. The men of Palnāḍu are very happy when they are engaged in battle. For the past three months and fifteen days the elders had been vying with each other for the right to the war. Among those vying for the honour were Peddanna Bāḍa Rāju, Sūr Nīḍu, Malli Nīḍu, the Sixty-six Heroes, the Seventy-seven Warriors, the excellent neighbouring kings, the tributary monarchs, and all the great men. But Brahma Nāyuḍu had not given the war to any of them. He had a son named Bālacandruḍu. The war belonged to him. For three months and fifteen days they waited. They ate only irregularly; they were burned by the sun; they were soaked by the rain; they had no comfortable beds on which to sleep; they suffered greatly.

Bāluḍu came only yesterday, but the war bears his name. How can I give it to anyone else? Shall I announce that the war belongs to my son? If I do that, they will say that I have done so because he is my son. That would never do. It must be done according to *dharma*,' thought Brahma Nāyuḍu.

He had ripe sorghum brought. He had an Ādiśēṣa fashioned from the sorghum. He gave Ādiśēṣa an eye. All this was done under the direction of Brahma Nāyuḍu. Near the mouth of Guttikoṇḍa cave is a great anthill. He put Ādiśēṣa in the anthill. Round Ādiśēṣa's eye he put sacred ash, heroic sandal, and *tāmbūlam*.

'Listen! O Heroes! Elders! Seventy-two Clansmen! The war will belong to the man who retrieves the sacred ash, the heroic sandal paste, and the *tāmbūlam*,' said Brahma Nāyuḍu.

As Brahma Nāyuḍu spoke, Ādiśēṣa flicked his tongue and hissed. The grass on all sides was burnt. That was the power of the Ādiśēṣa. All the Heroes, who spread from Kāryamapūḍi to Guttikoṇḍa cave, went running. No one could approach.

Then Bālacandruḍu leaped up. He wore a precious seven-knotted matchless pant; a thirty-cubit gold girdle; a lower cloth with knot tied on knot; folds, garlands, and . . .; . . . sun helmet; a turban like the moon wound round his head; . . .; . . .; rings in his ears; a large sapphire; and fine chest ornaments. He carried a shield, dagger, lance, club, mace, blowdart, axe, and battleaxe. Even though he wielded these weapons, he realized that he also could not approach the Ādiśēṣa.

When he had talked with his wife before coming to the battle, she had said, 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Heart Stealer! Lord, your father will construct an Ādiśēṣa and place it in an anthill. Even you will be unable to approach. So you must do as I tell you. Call on Garutmantuḍu. Garutmantuḍu and Ādiśēṣa are enemies. He is in league with Viṣṇu. Therefore, when you pray to Garutmantuḍu, he will come on his great wings that are acres in extent. He will alight on the anthill. Being afraid that Garutmantuḍu will strike his head, Ādiśēṣa will draw his head into the hole in the anthill. You must watch for your chance. When you see your opportunity, you must leap on to the anthill and grab the *tāmbūlam*, sacred ash, and heroic sandal paste. Then bound back to rejoin your younger brothers. The first battle and the first *tāmbūlam* will be yours. If you do as I say, you will be successful; if not, the task will prove to be impossible for you to accomplish.' These were the words that his wife had spoken.

Bāluḍu remembered what his wife had said. Raising his weapon, he prayed to Garutmantuḍu, saying, 'Destroy the monster right here on the battlefield. Come! Come, O Garutmantuḍu!'

When Bāluḍu called, Garutmantuḍu, who was with Viṣṇu, came gliding in on his great wings. When he alighted on the spire of the anthill, Ādiśēṣa drew in his head. Bāluḍu saw his chance. Grabbing the heroic sandal paste, sacred ash, and *tāmbūlam*, he jumped back and returned to his younger brothers.

When Bāluḍu got back to his younger brothers, all the people who were assembled said, 'The first battle and the first *tāmbūlam* belong to Bāluḍu. No one else can claim them.' And they clapped their hands. Then they prepared for battle and readied their swords. They were all very pleased and said, 'It is not within our power. We don't have the strength. The battle must be Bāluḍu's.' Thus did they speak.

Bāluḍu sat on the grass surrounded by his soldiers, the Sixty-six Heroes, the Seventy-seven Warriors, the excellent neighbouring kings, and the tributary monarchs. He sat as the bridegroom of war.

Now, in the beginning, the Gōsangis were among the mighty men of Palnāḍu. The Gōsangis are the Mādigas. They were mighty warriors: Śimbuni Muta wielding the double-edged sword; Bobbili Muta wielding the great sword; brave Tēvula Pōtu Nēḍu; Gandham Oppi Nēḍu; Sūgaṇḍi, the wrestler who fights what he sees. With hairlock, garlands of flowers, cymbals, great drums, and bells, there were 24,000 Gōsangi warriors.

But the Gōsangis saw no reason for the war, and they turned back. Each man went to his own place. After they were gone, repeated messages were sent to them, asking them to come back. But when the messengers came, the Gōsangis said that they would not come. The Gōsangis were the first followers of the creed. But after that the Mālas became followers of the tradition.[66]

Bālacandruḍu sat on the battlefield as the bridegroom of war. He called the herald and said, 'Go, Father! Mount a steed and gallop to the court. Speak to the ruler of the land like this: "O Nalagāma Rāju, Narasinga Rāju, Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju, and Kāma Rāju! Bāluḍu is sitting on the grass like the bridegroom of war. He has asked me to bring a bride and attendants from your court." ' This was what Bāluḍu said to the herald.

The meaning of what Bāluḍu said is this: Bāluḍu is the man, the bridegroom; the Rājus of Gurajāla are the girl. This was the meaning of his words. The words of the herald were meant to ignite the flames of their wrath.

When she heard the words of the herald, Nāyakurālu flared up, violent with rage, and said, 'What about this, Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju? Did you hear the words of the herald? Is Bālacandruḍu the bridegroom? Are you the bride? Talking like that is asking for trouble. Prepare to depart. Prepare yourselves for battle with Bālacandruḍu.'

Hearing Nāyakurālu's words, the Rāju replied, 'O Woman! Nāyakurālu, I need some soldiers. Call up the army.'

The army assembled at his command. There were elephants, camels, swift horses, irregulars, and all. When they were gathered, the Rāju and Nāyakurālu set forth. The Rāju had an elephant brought out and caparisoned with a howdah. On the howdah they hung pearl truppings. There were dancers, singers, rope dancers, Vaiṣṇava devotees, and reciters of the *Basava Purāṇa*. Brāhmaṇs sang praises; heralds shouted encomiums. Dancing girls, women of pleasure, sang songs; Brāhman women threw sacred rice.

Full of joy, Narasinga Rāju was leaving the city on his way to the battlefield. Brass drums, hand drums, lutes, cymbals, double drums, and gongs sounded as he rode along. Chowries, banners, and flags waved as dancing girls and . . . went along . . . whisks, parasols, . . ., war flags, and all manner of umbrellas were carried aloft.

They put a silver ladder against the elephant, and the Rāju mounted its back. But as they set out, everything was polluted. Everything was wrong. First they met a pot merchant with new pots on a yoke.[67]

The soldiers said, 'O Father! Narasinga Rāju and Nalagāma Rāju, a pot merchant is approaching, and he is carrying new pots. It is wrong for him to come. It does not augur anything good. Don't go today. Wait until tomorrow. Don't go to fight Bāluḍu today. We will go tomorrow. Adē Salām, Mahārāja, don't go today.'

'Hey! Never mind all that! March! All these bad signs and pollutions are the work of Cennayya. They are all the work of the God. Go, on!'

They went a bit further and met a cart. That was also a bad sign. Foxes howled and howled.

'Adē Salām! Mahārāja, the foxes are howling. You think that Bāluḍu is a mere youth, but you shouldn't deceive yourself. He is not a mere boy but Kriṣṇa himself. He is a fiery bolt of lightning. He has come to avenge. He carries a dagger. Narasinga Rāju, his name is Bāluḍu,' said the soldiers.

'What is the meaning of this? Why do you talk like that? These pollutions all belong to the God.'

They went a little further. Gurajāla Gurava Reḍḍi had seven daughters-in-law. They went to the Daṇḍi Creek for water. As they were returning, they met the procession. The young women were watching the procession as they walked along. In the path was a stone; the girl in the lead stubbed her toe. She lurched forward and fell back. One pot struck against the other, and all the pots fell to the earth. The girls began to cry.

Seeing the seven girls weeping, the soldiers said, 'Adē Salām, Mahārāja! Nalagāma Rāju and Narasinga Rāju, everything bodes evil. Let us remain here today and go on tomorrow.'

'Hey! Go on!' he said.

They went on a little further and met a Śaivite priest. He was on his way to the Śiva temple to bathe, feed, and clothe the God.

'Adē Salām, Mahārāja! We cannot go on. Listen to us, Sir. We will go tomorrow.'

'Go on! These are all Cennayya's.'

They went on and came to the temple of Iṣṭakāmēśvari in the southern part of Gurajāla. The Rājus were Śaivites, worshippers of Śiva. At the Iṣṭakāmēśvari temple they put a ladder against the elephant, and the Rāju descended from its back. When he had dismounted, he opened the door of the temple and went inside, bringing flowers. Everything was made ready: fragrant powders, flowers, and all.

The Rāju offered cassia and benzoin to the God. Worshipping the God, he said, 'Lord, Bāluḍu is small and I am great. Give me your leave to behead him and to return safely home.'

He prayed, saying, 'Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sambāśiva! Gauri Manōhara! Gangōttamānga! Nāgakankana! Śiva! Nandivāhanuḍu! Śankara! Ganagajāsurabhanga! Kāmabhasmānga! Lalita Śitakandhara! Layakālakarta! Sakalabhūtēśvara! Sarabhāvatāra! Lord! Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Look here, I have a silver spear. With this weapon, with this silver spear, I must pierce Bāluḍu and slay him. Lord, give me leave.'

Īśvara, the God, thought, 'What is this? What is the Rāju saying?

Why is he talking like this? The Rāju's life is in Bāluḍu's hands, but he says he wants to pierce Bāluḍu and behead him. How can he ask for permission to do that? It can't be.' Īśvara's throne shook and trembled. And the sacred gem, the mark on his forehead, rolled round and round and fell to the earth.

Seeing it fall, the Rāju flared up and was violently angry. He became very very angry. Quickly he gathered up the pieces.[68] 'O Īśvara, I have asked you for a boon and you have refused. May your eastern gate be a thorn waste! May your western gate be a boundary waste! Lord! Śankara! Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! May your southern gate be a pounded waste. Lord, may your nothern gate be a rocky waste,' he said, cursing the God.

Then the Rāju closed the chests and locked them. Again he mounted the elephant and set forth to do battle with Bāluḍu.

Bāluḍu sat on the grass and saw them approaching the battlefield. Bāluḍu sat with his younger brothers, the Sixty-six Heroes, the Seventy-two Clansmen, and the rest.

Nāyakurālu arrived on the battlefield to watch.

Bālucandruḍu said, 'O Younger Brothers, you may start the battle.'

Nāyakurālu came along to see how the fight would go. She came with parasols, banners, and sounding instruments. She was accompanied by lancers and some soldiers. Nāyakurālu came in this fashion to see how they would fight, to see how Bāluḍu and the Rāju would engage in battle. She came to watch.

Seeing the parasols, banners, lancers, and soldiers, and hearing the noise, Bāluḍu thought that it was the Rāju. He charged towards Nāyakurālu on his steed. When he charged, Nāyakurālu's heart broke. 'Oh, no! I am going to die,' she thought.

Her cinch rope broke. When it broke, Nāyakurālu dismounted and pulled on it. She felt faint and said, 'Lord! Lord Cennakēśvara, what is going to happen? What shall I do now?' And she closed her eyes.

Bāluḍu turned back and went after Nalagāma Rāju. When he got to him, Bāluḍu mounted the elephant and climbed into the howdah. The Rāju trembled when he saw Bāluḍu coming. Then the Rāju signalled the mahout, who was on the elephant, to take aim at the horse's flank with his spear.

Bāluḍu drew near to the Rāju and said, 'Hey there! Narasinga Rāju, will you run from me? Think! Think of your assembly of Gods.'

While he spoke, Bāluḍu climbed on to the howdah on the elephant's back. The Rāju said, 'Father! Father! Bālacandruḍu! O Father! Bālacandruḍu, I am your father. I am your father's younger brother. Bālacandra, I am related to you as a father and as an uncle. Father, it is against *dharma* for you to slay a father.' The Rāju wept and wept. His right eye cried a torrent of tears; his left eye cried rivers of tears; his waist bent and he fell to the earth.

As the Rāju wept, Bāluḍu thought, 'What is this? His life is in my hands. When he just sees me, he is racked with grief. I have two badges as a protector. The first is this: I grant refuge to those who ask. The second is this: If I grant a warrant of safety, I honour it. He is asking for refuge. How can I slay a man who is asking for refuge?' He wondered and wondered, trying to decide what to do.

As Bāluḍu hesitated, undecided what to do, the Rāju signalled the mahout who was sitting on the elephant's head. He signalled him to drive his spear into the steed's flank. . . .[69] While Bāluḍu was looking away, Narasinga Rāju hurled his weapon at him. When he did so, the mahout hurled his at Bāluḍu's steed. The steed was wounded and fell on the grass. As the steed landed on the grass, its life departed from it. The life went out of the ram. Bāluḍu was struck by the weapon and swooned to the earth. His younger brothers also fell where they were.

Regaining consciousness, Bāluḍu rose to his feet. 'O Father! Father! Younger Brothers! You who are greater Heroes than I! My Younger Brothers! O Younger Brothers, we were born on the same day and had our ceremonial uncleanliness on the same day. We grew up together and married on the same day. We played ball together and rode horses. In the assembly hall we rode horses, and in the fencing class we studied fencing. O Younger Brothers: Velamala Doranna with rings on your fingers! Kummari Patti with the earthen plate! Cākala Candu with the great bordered plate! Mangala Patti with the copper plate! Listen, Younger Brothers, Heroic Bulls,' he cried.

He prayed to Cennakēśvara, and he prayed to Ankālaparamēśvari: 'Goddess Ankālaparamēśvari! Nakṣatravīramandali! Nāgabhayankari! Kāsulakaṭāri! Kanakanivālli! Ōmkāri! Mahānkāḷi! Bhadramankāḷi! Candika! Sāmbavi! Jagadjani! Ankālaparamēśvari! Mother, what do you mean by this? Why this difficulty? Lord! Cennayya of Mācerla! Patron God! Cennayya of Ayodhya! Cennayya of Kāceli! Husband of Kānci! Cennayya of Pālamācāpuri! Lord! Word of Power! Cennayya of Mācerla! Patron God! Protector of Kāśi! Auspicious Syllable! Lord, why have you caused me this trouble? Why, Great Soul?'

As Bāluḍu prayed, the God appeared and said, 'O Father, I am going to . . . You have nothing to fear. I will be in a bundle on your back.' This was the assurance that he gave.

Goddess Ankālaparamēśvari also gave assurances. 'You have nothing to fear, Father. I will dwell in the tip of your weapon. Don't worry about anything,' she said, and gave him leave.

'But I can't see my younger brothers.'

'Can't you see your younger brothers? Listen, Bālacandra. You say that you can't see your younger brothers? Call them! Call your younger brothers.'

'O Younger Brothers,' he said. 'Kammarī Patti with work bracelets on your ankles; Velamala Doranna with rings on your fingers; Kummari Patti with the earthen plate; Cākala Candu with the great bordered plate; Mangula Patti, you who take golden razors and fashion beautiful hair-dos! Where are you, Younger Brothers?'

The little brothers came and joined their big brother. All five of the younger brothers came and sat beside their elder brother.

Bāluḍu's wife, Māncāla, had said: 'Lord of Breath! Master of Life! Lord, you will believe the Rāju. He will say that he is your father and your uncle. And he will tell you that it is against *dharma* for you to slay him. You will heed his words, and he will hurl his weapon at you. When you are struck by his weapon, your guts will spill out. As your guts spill out, the mahout will cast his weapon at your steed. The steed will die. You must then go to the banks of Ganga[70] and take out all your guts. After removing them, you must wash them well. Everything without exception must be well washed. When they are washed, you must hang your intestines on a tree for Garutmantuḍu. Pray to Garutmantuḍu and he will come to your aid.

'This is the help that he will give you. When the battle is not going in your favour, Garutmantuḍu will come down and shield you, and you will be victorious. So give him your intestines, and fight without being wrathful. Again, Narasinga Rāju will attempt to behead you and sacrifice you. But he will miss. After he misses, you must try again to hit him.

'When you fight, you must not behead him with your sword. You must pull off his head along with the veins and tendons. It must come off along with the veins and tendons. Our father-in-law, Komma Rāju, will be there. You must offer Narasinga Rāju's head to Komma Rāju. You will take revenge for caste and family on this earth. When your work is finished, you too must fall on the battlefield.

'Because Ala Rācamallu was slain, I have assessed a tax. The Rāju will be very pleased because you have had revenge. Komma Rāju will be very pleased.'

As his wife had told him to do, Bāluḍu went to the Nāgulēru and pulled out all his guts. As he washed them, some of the small guts floated on the water. Bāluḍu looked at them and wondered. Then he reviled his mother. This is what he said: 'Mother, so you were afraid to see me go and thought you would nurse me? Though you were afraid and wanted to nurse me, the black heart that stays on my left side is not afraid. The chili is small, but it does not lack hotness. If the chili is small, what happens to its hotness, Mother?' This is how he reviled his mother.

He prayed to Garutmantuḍu: 'Gāruḍa, come to the middle of the battlefield. Oooeee! Come, Garutmantuḍu. Come!' he said.

Garutmantuḍu came and landed on the tree. Then Bāluḍu took out his small intestines and put them on the tree, cleaned out his belly, and filled the cavity with tulasi leaves and . . . When it was full, he donned trussed-up truss, the truss of Hanumān, and a lower cloth with knot tied on knot. He carried a shield, dagger, lance, club, mace, blowdart, axe, and battleaxe. With these weapons, and his truss bound up, he sat on the grass.

Bāluḍu was injured. The younger brothers were also wounded. The younger brothers sat talking among themselves.

Meanwhile, Nalagāma Rāju[71] went back to Gurajāla Fort. When he got there, he said to Nāyakurālu, 'O Nāyakurālu, have you seen what has happened?'

'What is it, Rāju?'

'I need some more soldiers.'

'Take them.'

'I have slain Bāluḍu, and I have nothing more to fear. My heroic son is dead and there will be no more war. I have slain the lord of time and death, and the battle is over,' he said, boasting of his valour and making promises. He said that he had slain Bāluḍu. 'Tomorrow morning I shall go and behead his younger brothers. Send me some soldiers. Send them!' he said, asking for reinforcements.

When he asked her for elephants, camels, swift horses, and irregulars, Nāyakurālu thought, 'How can this be? This Rāju's life is in Bāluḍu's hands. He says that he has slain Bāluḍu and has nothing more to fear. How can he say that?'

'What are you thinking, Woman? Look! Look here at my spear. Do you see the blood?'

She looked at it, and it really was blood. Nāyakurālu thought, 'Never mind. If one shoots at a peacock, he may hit a sparrow. If one shoots at a sparrow, he may hit a peacock. Maybe there is some reason why it happened this way. It could actually be true.'

Believing what he said to be true, she sent some soldiers. Taking the soldiers, he went to his elder brother. He went to Nalagāma Rāju. 'Elder Brother, give me leave to return to the battlefield. I have slain Bāluḍu. We have nothing more to fear. Only his younger brothers remain. Today I will go and kill the younger brothers and some more of the soldiers,' he said.

'Younger Brother! Younger Brother! Younger Brother! O Younger Brother, you have not slain Bāluḍu! It is not Bāluḍu, the avenging foe, that you have slain. How can you think that he is a mere youth. He is not a youth. Listen to what I am telling you! He is not a youth, he is Kriṣṇa himself. Listen to what I am telling you, Little Brother,' said the elder brother, weeping pearl-like tears. The tears soaked all his face. 'O Father, if Bāluḍu comes from the east, go west. Go west! If Bāluḍu comes from the west, go north! Then, if Bāluḍu comes from the north, go south! By avoiding him, you will avoid injury. Listen to me, Little Brother!'

'Hey! Elder Brother, how can you talk like that? How can I refuse to fight? Where is your courage? Where is your steadfastness? The battle must be fought!'

'Go then. Your *karma* is your own. Go!' he said.

Narasinga Rāju went out to meet the army, and they fought a terrible, terrible battle. They fought and raged while heads fell to the earth. Heads lay gaping on the earth. Chest to chest fought the spirited men. . . . They fought like hills clashing together. They fought like two great hills striking together. They fought like two bulls mauling. As they fought, the sky turned red; the heavens shook; the earth became a burying ground. Bāluḍu and Narasinga Rāju clashed and fought.[7] The Rāju gnashed his teeth and his eyes glowed like the eyes of a spirit. He preened his great sharp moustache. He fought like the king of Demons. They fought like a tiger scattering cattle in the forest. They fought like Karṇa and Arjuna. They fought like Śankara clashing. They fought like Vāli and Sugrīva.

As they fought, the Rāju approached, mounted on his elephant.

'O Younger Brothers, who is that coming?'

'The Rāju is coming.'

'O Younger Brothers, I am wounded by a weapon. The Rāju went back to Gurajāla Fort, and now he is returning to the battlefield. He went back to Nāyakurālu and made promises of some kind. We can't have any idea of the sort of promises he made and how he flattered her. If it really is the Rāju coming, he is coming to fight with us. I have been wounded, and I don't have the strength to go out and fight him. Go to the front, but do not engage the Rāju. Just make the elephant stop. Afterwards, I will come along, slowly.'

'O.K., we will do as you say, Elder Brother.'

The younger brothers advanced, and the Rāju approached them with his soldiers. Narasinga Rāju wondered as he looked out from the elephant's howdah.

'Hey there! Hey, Mahout!'

'What is it, Father, Sir Rāju?'

'Who is that coming?'

Who was it? It was Bāluḍu's younger brothers coming. Bāluḍu had not yet got up from the grass. He was wounded.

'Father, Bālacandruḍu's younger brothers are coming.'

'Look carefully!'

'Yes, it is only Bāluḍu's younger brothers.'

'Goad it! Goad it! Goad it!' he said, ordering the mahout to goad the elephant.

When the mahout jabbed the elephant, it raised its trunk and squealed, 'Geeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee,' as it came charging.

Bāluḍu saw it coming and said 'Oh no! the Rāju is bearing down upon my younger brothers with his elephant.'

He rose to his feet, heroism shining. He put his weapon, called 'Sāmanta', under his arm. With his weapon, Sāmanta, under his arm, Bāluḍu slowly followed along behind his brothers.

When he saw him coming, The Rāju said, 'Hey there! Hey, Mahout!'

'What is it, Father?'

'Who is that? Who is coming there?'

The mahout looked. His heart broke, and he fell to the earth.

'Father! Sir Rāju, Bāluḍu is coming!'

'How can that be! I slew Bāluḍu yesterday. How can a dead man be coming? Look carefully,' he said.

'Sir, it is most certainly Bāluḍu.'

'You're crazy! I slew Bāluḍu and I have nothing to fear from him. Look carefully,' he said.

'Father, there is no question about it. It is Bāluḍu. Your death approaches you. If your death approaches, mine also approaches. We are both going to die,' said the mahout.

Bāluḍu looked at them with amazement.

The younger brothers said, 'He has no regard for us. He is charging us with his elephant.'

But when the mahout told him that the elder brother was coming, the Rāju said, 'Turn back! Turn back to the Gurajāla Fort!'

There was a slight delay between the time when the Rāju gave the order to turn back and when the elephant actually got turned around. In that space of time, the younger brothers arrived. Velamala Doranna came along with Kammari Kākanna. They grabbed the elephant's trunk, pulled it forward, and threw it back. The elephant fell back on the knob of its head.

They placed a ladder against the elephant, and Bāluḍu entered the

howdah. As he counted, Bāluḍu said, 'Hey, Mahout! Do you know what you did? You slew my steed with your weapon.'

Taking his weapon tightly in his hand, Bāluḍu jabbed the mahout and threw him to the earth. He ran the mahout through and threw him violently to the ground. Then he entered the howdah.

Narasinga Rāja trembled and shook violently as he watched Bāluḍu entering the howdah. Trembling, he said, 'Father! Father! My Father! I am your father, Son. I am your uncle. Bālacandra, it is against *dharma* to slay a father.'

The Rāju wept grievous tears; pearl-like tears soaked all his face; he fell to the earth as if struck by a bolt of lightning; his waist bent and he fell to the earth. 'O Father, listen to what I say. Listen, my little son.'

Bāluḍu said, 'O Narasinga Rāju, just a short while ago you cried like that and got me to stop. I hesitated as I tried to decide what to do. Do you know what dasturdly deed you did then? I'll tell you what you did. When I listened to you, you hurled your weapon at me. My guts spilled out. Now, how do you expect me to give you quarter when you beg for mercy? Think of your assembly of Gods. Think of your grandfather and great-grandfather. Think of your Gods and your parents. There is no way that you are going to escape.'

'The writing leaf that Śiva gave is torn today. Īśvara! Paramēśvara! Jagadēśvara! Hara, Hara! Sambāśiva, the writing leaf that you gave me is finished today. My work is ruined. The writing leaf that you gave me is finished today.

'O Elder Brother! Nalagāma Rāju, I did not heed your words. I listened to the words of a woman. I listened to Nāyakurālu's evil counsel, and see what has happened to me. I didn't expect anything like this. Elder Brother! Elder Brother! Nalagāma Rāju!' grieved Narasinga Rāju.

Narasinga Rāju clashed with Bāluḍu. They fought a terrible, terrible battle. Bāluḍu cast his weapon at the Rāju. The Rāju was the elder, and Bāluḍu was the younger. Back and forth flew the weapons. The Rāju hurled his weapon at Bāluḍu. It missed and passed behind him. The weapon that Narasinga Rāju cast also missed its mark. Again he hurled it. Then, as a lion pounces on a cow, Bāluḍu struck the Rāju like a lightning bolt. Bāluḍu grabbed the Rāju in his hands, bent him double, spun him around, and threw him to the earth.

Meanwhile, the younger brothers were falling where they were. Then Bāluḍu, as he had promised, took Narasinga Rāju under his arm. He tore off his head along with the veins and tendons. When he had torn it off, he raised up the head. With his weapon under his arm, he

went straight to the platform. At the platform sat Brahma Nāyuḍu, Komma Rāju, and all the rest.

Brahma Nāyuḍu said, 'O Komma Rāju.'

'Father?'

'Look there. The Rāju is coming. It is Narasinga Rāju, the friend of Nāyakurālu.'

When they heard that the Rāju was coming, they set up a three-legged stool. On the stool they spread a cushion. On the cushion they spread a jewelled cover. Over that, they spread a silk cloak. Bāluḍu brought Narasinga Rāju's head, and placed it on the silk cloak. All the elders offered cassia and benzoin. They also offered sandal paste and musk. The elders offered cassia and benzoin, and they all did obeisance to the head.

Brahma Nāyuḍu said, 'Listen to me, Rāju. When you were alive, you did not come to terms with us. Instead you heeded Nāyakurālu's evil counsel, and that is the reason why you have come to this end. That is why you have died. While you were alive we did not get our revenge. You thought that we would serve you. Now you are dead and we are worshipping you.'

Brahma Nāyuḍu and all the elders bowed down.

Then Brahma Nāyuḍu looked at his son, Bālacandruḍu, and said, 'O Father, you have gone to war and fought, and now you have come back.'

'O Cennayya of Mācerla! Cennayya of Mācerla! Patron God! Cennayya of Ayodhya! Protector of our Souls! Cennayya of Kāceli! Husband of Kānci! Cennayya of Pālamācāpuri! Auspicious Syllable! Cennayya of Kāceli! Kēśava! Husband of Kānci. Cennayya of Mācerla! Patron God!' he prayed.

As Komma Rāju had ordered, in fulfilment of his father's command, and because the tax was levied, Bālacandruḍu gave the head to Komma Rāju.

Brahma Nāyuḍu said, 'O Son! Bālacandruḍu, you have joined forces with an enemy. I am not one to join an enemy. You have foolishly joined the enemy. . . .'

At those words, Bāluḍu flared up with anger at his father. 'Father, will you desist from your tardy regrets? Why this belated weeping? You fled after the cock fight. Why this belated complaining? Who told you to stage a cock fight with Nāyakurālu? Why were you defeated by a woman? Did I tell you to lose? Did I tell you to fight, and did I tell you to lose? By treachery you had Lankanna slain in the herd. You killed Gopanna by the same method. You saw Nāyakurālu building a dike and sent Jaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju and Gaṭṭiṇḍa Māḷḷa Rāju. They were also

slain by your treachery. Why this tardy weeping? I am not going to join you in your weeping. You say that you are not one to join the enemy?'

Then Bāluḍu uttered a battle cry and jumped a *yojana* into the air. He charged the armies. When he charged, Narasinga Rāju's soldiers went fleeing in every direction. They thought that Bāluḍu was coming at them from every side.

Then Bāluḍu said, 'O Soldiers, don't run away. O Father! Rāju, I am not going to pursue you any farther. I will not catch you. Come back and attack me. Wield your weapons against me. Shoot me with your guns. Cut me with your swords. I am not going to do anything.'

All the Rājus were fleeing.

'Don't go, Rājus. Don't flee from me. I am not going to follow you,' he said. But the Rājus were afraid and ran away. 'There is nothing for you to fear. Bring your weapons and plant them in the ground. I am about to depart for Vaikuṇṭha.'

They believed him, brought their weapons, and planted them in the earth with the tips pointing upward. Bāluḍu circumambulated the weapons. Then he leaped a *yojana* into the air and came down on the points. He was stabbed. Full of bravery, he was stabbed.

This is the end of Bāluḍu's war.

Notes

1 The *purāṇic* stories of Hariścandra and Candramatī Dēvi are very popular in the Telugu country. By means of this story, Bāluḍu is associated with them.

2 The story of Lava and Kuśa, sons of Rāma and Sītā, is found in the 'Uttara Khaṇḍa' of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. They are more important in Telugu oral tradition than they are in the Sanskrit or Telugu literary versions. The accomplishments of the boys are also much greater in the oral tradition.

3 Triśanka is the father of Hariścandra. The story referred to here seems to be an adaptation of the story of *Prahlāda* and the Narasimha Avatāra, and an unidentified Śiva story.

4 *Sixty-six Heroes*: the sixty-six *vīranāyakulu* who are frequently mentioned throughout the epic. They remain today, as the *lingas* in the Temple of the Heroes at Kārempūḍi.

5 This Śaivite story, which is given in full detail below, appears in the *periyapurāṇam* by Cēkkilār in Tamil. It is also found in the *Basavapurāṇam* by Pālakuriki Sōmanatha in Telugu. These three versions, and others found in Telugu, differ from one another in many respects. The most striking difference between this version and the others is the emphasis placed upon the mother, Siriyāla Mangamma. In the others, the emphasis is on the devotion of the father. Here it is on the devotion of the mother and the son. Here the woman, Siriyāla Mangamma, totally dominates her husband and the action.

6 This is Gāleyya's only reference to Brahma Nāyuḍu's home being in Kunṭala, i.e. Karnāṭaka.

7 *Bhaktuḍu*: Male devotee.

8 The units of measure are not given.

9 *junnu*: A very special dish among the Telugus. It is made from colostrum (the milk produced for a few days after the birth of a calf). Depending upon how it is prepared, it can resemble custard or a kind of soft cheese.

10 *vaḍiyalu . . . appaḍālu*: Various kinds of sweets, snacks, and pickles.

11 Milk products from cows are considered superior to those from water buffalo, which are the most common dairy animals in the area.

12 *power of illusion*: *māya*.

13 *Śiva Kāncī*: Apparently the Śaivite sector of Kāncī in Tamilnadu. It is more generally known as a Vaiṣṇavite city.

14 *five sins*: *panchamahā pātakamulu*. *Sūryarāyāndhra Nighaṇṭuvu* gives the following list: killing a Brāhmaṇ (*brahmahatya*); drinking liquor (*surāpānamu*); stealing gold (*svarṇastēyamu*); violating the bed of one's guru (*gurutalpagamanamu*); and associating with those who commit the sins enumerated above.

15 'Pāpayya', 'Pāpuḍu', and 'Pāpanna' all refer to the same boy. They are different male suffixes attached to the same base.

16 *Ānanda*: A name of Viṣṇu, especially as Bālarāma.

17 *Gōvinda*: Kṛiṣṇa.

18 All three are popular cradle-songs.

19 *bitter gourd*: *kākara kāya*.

20 *kandi*: (*cytius cadjan*), a species of legume or pulse.

21 I have no further information about such a practice.

22 *Dēva-Brāhmaṇa*: 'Dēva' (God, deity) and 'Brāhmaṇa' (Brāhmaṇ). Here Gāleyya appears to have taken the compound Dēvabrāhmulu (Gods and Brāhmaṇs) and used it in a singular form. The usage is grammatically incorrect. The word 'Dēva' can also be used to refer to a Brāhmaṇ. In that sense it can be viewed as an example of his word doubling.

23 i.e. all the sacred love.

24 *Brahma*: The supreme, self-existent, absolute, eternal soul of the universe.

25 *Śeṭṭi*: A merchant caste of South India. The caste members are usually involved in trade and money-lending. The term is also loosely used to designate anyone involved in work that includes trade.

26 *The maidservants said . . . the God of love*: The quotation is taken from the *Amarakōśa* (a Sanskrit dictionary in metre). It gives the names of the Hindu God of love. When using an unfamiliar word, Telugu scholars developed the habit of quoting the verse that defines it. This habit was also assumed by the readers of *purāṇas* and others. Often the verse so quoted has no real place in the context, Gāleyya has done the same thing. He uses the Sanskrit quotation to sound learned and then simply translates it as he sees fit. See Amarasimha, *Nāmalingānuśāna* (*Amarakoṣa*), ed. N. G. Sardesi (Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1969), I, 25 p. 3.

27 *elephant . . . horse of sapphire*: Probably simply means a large amount of precious stones.

28 *citta and svāti*: The fourteenth and fifteenth lunar mansions. They are both associated with rain. Many Telugu proverbs include these two words with this meaning.

29 The tape is not clear and the translation is tentative.

30 Gāleyya is used to saying the names of the three worlds in succession, and, thus, he does so here even when it creates a contradiction.

31 *You first . . . entered the court together*: This is an often repeated formula, but it is never clear. The translation is approximate.

32 Though the name 'Hari' usually refers to Viṣṇu, it also applies, as in this instance, to Yama, the God of Death. Yama is known as the noose carrier.

33 i.e. 'Is Māncāla angry?'

34 The Sanskrit verses he quotes are unclear. They seem to have a very tenuous connection with the translation he gives.

35 *Śrīgiri*: Śrīsailam, Parvatam. I have no explanation for Gāleyya's inserting it here. Śrīgiri is of course the location of a Śaivite temple.

36 *Tāmbūlam* is normally taken after the meal is over.

37 Śīlamma is Brahma Nāyuḍu's mother, Bāluḍu's grandmother. She may have some other connection with the Gaṇḍa family, Māncāla's family, but this is nowhere stated. Brahma Nāyuḍu is often called Śīlamma Nāyuḍu, and the reference here may be to a 'holy place' and a 'seal' of Brahma Nāyuḍu's family.

38 *My husband . . . Poli! Pulō! Pulō!*: 'bōnam' means food or meat. This 'Bōna Singa Rāju' may mean the Rāju who is meat for the sacrifice. The description of the sacrifice of Bangāla Rāju follows the general pattern of sacrifices to local Goddesses in Palnāḍu. The 'fifth caste' are the outcastes who perform animal sacrifices. See T. Rama Row, p. 12, for a similar human sacrifice to the spirits of the battlefield by Velama warriors. 'He went to the field of battle by midnight, and mixed rice with the blood of the enemies who had been slain, put it into the skulls of the dead, walked over the ground alone and naked and covered with ashes, pronounced certain incantations over the mixture and threw it in all directions to propitiate the spirits called Sakini, Dakini, Bhootas, and Betala which are said to hover over the field.'

39 Wells are often very broad and have steps leading down to the water. I have even seen them with rooms carved out of the rock sides.

40 *Five Sacred Products of the Cow*: *pancagavyamu*, the five articles derived from the cow: milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung.

41
nīḷḷalōna mosali nigiḍi yēnugu baṭṭu
bayala kukkacēta bhangpaḍunu
sthānubalimi kani tanabalmi kādayā
viśvadābhirāma vinura vēma.

This is a popular verse attributed to Vēmana. He is credited with much of the aphoristic verse in Telugu. The meaning of the final line, 'Viśvadābhirāma, Vinura Vēma', has been variously interpreted. But it has never been conclusively established. It serves as a concluding line to a high percentage of the Vēmana poems. The story is a *purāṇic* one.

42 *hold them*: or perhaps, 'take them'.

43 *Agrajanmuḍu*: lit. 'first born', it means Brāhmaṇ.

44
panasatōnala kanna pancadāralakanna
juṇṭitēne kanna junnu kanna
cerakurasamu kanna celula māṭalu tīpi
viśvadābhirāma vinura vēma

Cf. note 41.

45 I have omitted a description of the ram owing to unclarity.

46 Gāleyya breaks down and cries at this point, anticipating what is going to happen.

47 *Bētāluḍu*: A guardian spirit of the Velamas. See T. Rama Row, *Rajahs*, pp. 5 and 12 (note 38, above). He is also an important character in the popular *Bhatti Vikramārkula Kathalu*. A Bētāluḍu is also mentioned as one of the ancestors of the Rājus of Palnāḍu. 'The Story of Bālacandruḍu', p. 545.

48 *Droṇa and Kripa*: Brāhmaṇs who fought in the *Mahābhārata* war.

49 *āre*: (*Bauhenia Spitica*).

50 *Strī Vīrla Mēḍapi*: Another name for Mēḍapi. Gāleyya says it means that it was constructed by Brahma Nāyuḍu for the women (*strīlu*) and the Heroes (*vīrlu*).

51 Telugu books are traditionally inscribed on palm leaves with a sharp style, and a Brāhmaṇ would naturally have one on his person.

52 Again at this point, Gāleyya is moved to tears and breaks the narrative for several minutes until he regains his composure.

53 *Madana Kēśavayya*: A name of Viṣṇu.

54 Adē salām, Mahārāja: The former is a respectful Muslim greeting, and the latter (lit. great king) is also a respectful form of address.

55 *ēpa tree*: (*Shorea Robusta*), a heavy mahogany-like wood.

56 *Śrīman Nārāyaṇa*: Viṣṇu.

57 The logic of this genealogy will require considerable further investigation.

58 *Kunjuluḍu*: Kunjala, a warrior of Skanda, the God of war (Sörenson, *Index*).

59 *Singa Rāju*: Perhaps Narasinga Rāju.

60 *knife of the Nandas*: Not clear who the Nandas are here. Kriṣṇa's foster-father was the shepherd king Nanda.

61 *Brahma-Rudra*: Brahma and Rudra (Śiva). It means the 'mighty Gods'.

62 *writing leaf Śiva . . . torn roday*: Being born by Īśvara's boon, his fate is spelt out on a palm leaf given by Śiva. When the writing sheet is torn, his life is finished.

63 *pancamālu*: This may be a form of *pancamulu*, meaning the 'fifth caste', the untouchables. It may also be a form of *pāncālu* referring to the five Telugu artisan castes.

64 This particular story is not repeated anywhere else in Gāleyya's account. The others are all dealt with in considerable detail elsewhere in the epic.

65 *Holy Badge of Kāli*: The nature of this badge is not explained.

66 A story taken from the *Yādava Rāju Katha* tradition gives another account of why the Mādigas did not fight a battle at Kārempūḍi. See Elmore, pp. 103–4. That tradition is sung primarily by Mādigas as this one is by Mālas.

67 New pots, and the other things they meet, are commonly held to be inauspicious throughout the Telugu country.

68 *Quickly he gathered up the pieces*: This is not clear, and the translation is tentative.

69 I have omitted a couple of sentences here where Gāleyya struggles to catch the thread of what he is saying.

70 *Ganga*: The Nāgalēru.

71 This should be 'Narasinga Rāju'.

72 This line is out of place in the context.